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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Second periodic report submitted by Qatar under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2018*

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The second periodic report of Qatar on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Introduction

1. At the outset of this second periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the State of Qatar would like to confirm its commitment to fulfilling its obligations under all international conventions to which it is a party. The State of Qatar acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 24 March 2009. Decree No. 28 of 2009 approving accession to the Convention was issued on 23 June 2009. Article 1 of that Decree provides that the Convention shall have the force of law in accordance with article 68 of the Constitution of Qatar, while taking into account reservations and declarations contained the instrument of accession. The Convention was published in the Official Gazette, Issue No. 8, on 23 June 2009.

2. The State of Qatar submitted its initial report on its commitments and undertakings with respect to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in November 2011. It presented that report before the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women during the Committee's fifty-seventh session in February 2014.

3. As this report is being submitted, four Qatari women are for the first time ever assuming membership of the Shura (Advisory) Council. That development demonstrates the interest being taken by the Qatari leadership in supporting women's participation in all areas of life, including the legislative field, and encouraging further progress towards full political participation by women in accordance with article 34 of the Constitution of Qatar, which guarantees equality of all citizens in rights and obligations. In addition, the first woman official spokesperson has been appointed at the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs. That is the first Qatari woman to be appointed to that post.

Drafting methodology

4. The State of Qatar has the honour to submit this second periodic report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in accordance with article 18 of the international Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which has to do with monitoring implementation of the Convention. In drafting the report, the State of Qatar has relied on the "Compilation of guidelines on the form and content of reports to be submitted by States parties to the international human rights treaties".[1] The methodology used in drafting this report can be presented as follows:

- At its regular meeting No. 13 of 2017, held on 5 April 2017, the Cabinet charged the committee responsible for drafting national reports to the universal periodic review mechanism with drafting the second periodic report of the State of Qatar on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In keeping with the importance attached by the State of Qatar to the periodic reports submitted under treaty mechanisms, that

[1] See HRI/GEN/Rev.6.

committee was chaired by His Excellency the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. Since the report was a joint national report, the committee's membership included representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Shura Council; the Ministry of the Interior; the Ministry of Justice; the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs; the Ministry of Public Health; the Ministry of Education and Higher Education; and the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

- To ensure that the drafting process was integrated and included all the various stakeholders within the State, the committee contacted over 30 Government and civil society institutions to collect information relevant to the report. The goal was to include all segments of society in preparing the report.

- The committee charged with preparing the report consulted reports and studies relating to the rights of women in the State of Qatar issued by various Government agencies, including reports issued by the National Human Rights Committee and by civil society institutions. The committee also reviewed reports submitted by the State to United Nations bodies, in particular the national report on the human rights situation in the State of Qatar submitted under the universal periodic review mechanism of the Human Rights Council. This report was drafted at the same time that the State was presenting its third and fourth periodic reports during the seventy-fifth session of the Committee of the Rights of the Child, which was held in May 2017. Qatar also presented its first periodic report under the Arab Charter on Human Rights during the thirteenth session of the Arab Commission for Human Rights in May 2017.

- The report is divided into three parts. Part I contains basic information about the State of Qatar. Part II contains information related to monitoring implementation of the articles of the Convention, in order from article 1 through article 16. It also contains information on measures taken to comply with the observations and recommendations made by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women pursuant to the initial report of the State of Qatar.[2] Part III consists of a section that the committee charged with drafting the report saw fit to add concerning challenges and future directions.

- In accordance with the established practice and recommendations for treaty bodies, the report was forwarded to the National Human Rights Committee for comments and feedback.

- The committee has tried to make the second periodic report of the State of Qatar a continuation of constructive dialogue with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. Since it is a follow-up implementation report, we have dispensed with repeating information that the State of Qatar has already provided in its initial report[3] and its interim report[4], which include information submitted by the State in follow-up to the final observations. The present report simply refers to information previously provided in the initial report, and adds information on changes that have occurred during the intervening period covered by the present report. Efforts by the State to implement recommendations will be addressed in when commenting on the articles of the Convention in order to avoid repetition of information.

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[2] See the guidelines document. CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/1

[3] See CEDAW/C/QAT/1.

[4] See CEDAW/C/QAT/CO/Add.1.

5. As it submits the present second periodic report to the Committee, the State of Qatar reaffirms its readiness to cooperate fully with the Committee by responding to any requests for clarification about the implementation of the Convention. The State wishes the Committee continued success in its endeavours to eliminate discrimination against women.

Part I
Basic information about the State of Qatar

6. In this section, the report presents basic information about the State of Qatar. In that regard, it refers to information contained in the previous report of the State party in the section entitled "common core document". The State party also wishes to submit the following updated information:

A. Population

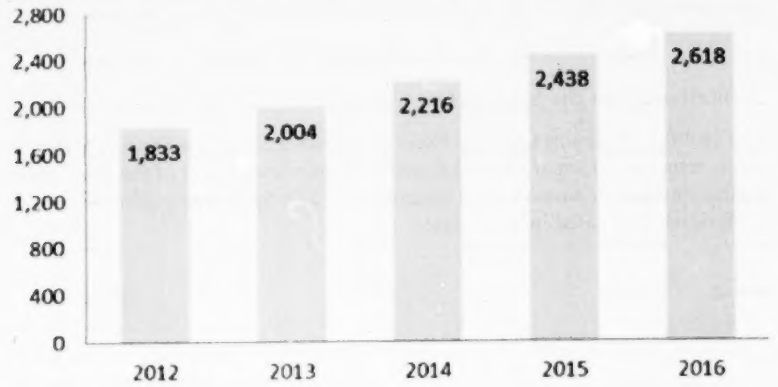
7. As of the end of September 2017, the total population of the State was 2,634,234 persons, breaking down into 1,974,041 males, or 75 per cent, and 660,193 females, representing 25 per cent. That represents an annual increase of 3.2 per cent. Table 1 shows the increase in population in the State of Qatar by sex since 2015. The rise in the population growth rates in the State reflects the increase in investment and development in the State. The population increase is attributable to the influx of workers coming in to respond to the needs of infrastructure projects and large development projects. Figure 1 shows the population increase from 2012 to 2016.

Table 1
Population growth in Qatar by sex through 2015

Year	*Males*	*Females*	*Overall total*
1997	342 459	179 564	522 023
2004	496 382	247 647	744 029
2010	1 284 739	414 696	1 699 435
2015	1 816 981	587 795	2 404 776

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, 2015 Census 2015

Figure 1
Population in the State of Qatar (in thousands)
For the period 2012–2016



Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

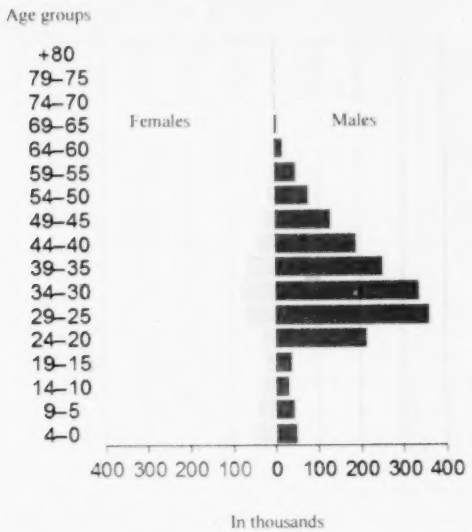
8. Table 2 shows the age makeup of the population in the State of Qatar in the year 2016. The population pyramid in figure 2 shows the total population of Qataris and non-Qataris, and the discrepancy created by the increase in the numbers of workers coming to the State of Qatar, especially with respect to non-Qatari males. The population pyramid in figure 3 shows the balance of female and males in the Qatari population.

Table 2
Relative distribution of inhabitants by broad age group, nationality and sex
Mid-year population estimates, 2016

Nationality	*Sex*	*Age 0-14*	*Age 15-64*	*Age 65 and older*	*Total*
Qataris	Females	36.5	59.8	3.7	100
	Males	38.9	57.8	3.3	100
Non-Qatari	Females	24.5	74.5	1.0	100
	Males	6.9	92.4	0.7	100
Total	**Females**	**27.3**	**71.7**	**1.6**	**100**
	Males	**9.2**	**89.8**	**0.9**	**100**

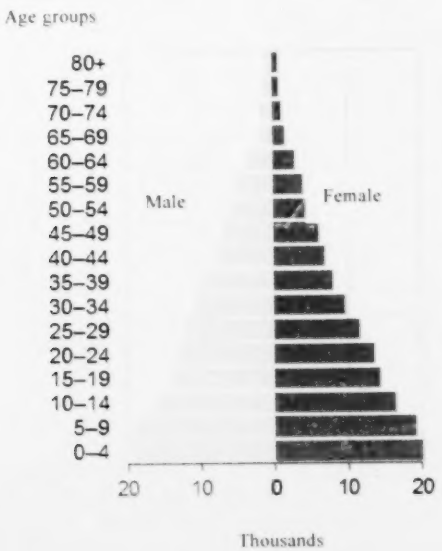
Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

Figure 2
Population pyramid of total population (in thousands), 2016



Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics

Figure 3
Population pyramid for Qataris (in thousands), 2016



Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics

9. A comparison of figures 2 and 3 show that the non-Qatari population distribution is therefore atypical, while the population pyramid for Qatari nationals alone shows a normal age-gender distribution. Most of the population of the country is between 15 and 64 years of age, and the majority of persons in that age range are non-Qatari males. The pyramid for Qatari-nationals shows that Qatari society is a young society, comprising a high proportion of children and young people under 15 years of age and a low proportion of persons over 65.

B. Economic and social indicators

10. The most recent statistics show that the State of Qatar is going through an outstanding phase of advancement towards full and comprehensive development. Real gross domestic product (GDP) estimates for Qatar registered a 2.2 per cent growth rate in 2016, amounting to 796 billion Qatari riyals, as compared with the estimates for 2015, which were 779 Qatari riyals. Qatar is among the countries with a very high level of human development, ranking thirty-third in the world according to the human development index contained in the Human Development Report 2016 published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This ranking reflects the considerable and sustained progress achieved by Qatar in the area of human development. The report shows that Qatar's human development index score improved from 0.855 in the 2015 report to 0.856 in the 2016 report. That reflects advances made in education, health and GDP. In the area of education, the report shows a rise in the adult literacy rate for both sexes, from 96.7 per cent in the 2015 report to 97.8 per cent in the 2016 report. There was also a rise in higher education enrolment for persons of university enrolment age to 16 per cent in the 2016 report from 14 per cent in the 2015 report. For per capita income share of GNI, the report indicates that the State of Qatar saw a rise in that rate from $66.18 in 2015 to $57.82 in 2016. At the same time, the labour force participation rate for persons age 15 years and older stood at 84.6 per cent – a figure higher than that of Norway, which, in 2016, was ranked first in the world according to the human development index. There was a fall in the youth unemployment rate (for persons aged 15 to 24) from 1.1 per cent in the 2015 report to 0.8 per cent in the 2016 report. The report measured an increase in the percentage of Internet users from 91.5 per cent in the 2015 report to 92.9 per cent in the 2016 report. Despite a fall in the total fertility rate between 2010 and 2015, which fell to 2.1 live births per woman in 2015, the country's total fertility rate remains higher than that of Norway (1.8 births per mother), Hong Kong (1.2 births per mother) and Singapore (1.2 births per mother).

11. In 2016, expenditure on education as a proportion of overall public expenditure stood at 10.5 per cent. Expenditure on health stood at 10.8 per cent of total public expenditures for the State in 2016, while spending for social protection stood at 0.83 of total public expenditures for the State in 2016.

Development goals

12. Qatar is committed to assessing progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It has issued five reports on the subject, the most recent one in January 2017. That report showed that the State of Qatar has met most of the Millennium Development Goals and has made tangible progress on those that have yet to be achieved. The key findings of the fifth report were as follows:

- There are no cases of poverty. The State has been able to provide good living for all citizens and residents on its territory.

- Qatar is close to achieving Goal 2 of achieving universal primary education for boys and girls by 2015: school attendance rates in primary school for both sexes are over 91 per cent.
- Qatar has made great progress towards the achievement of Goal 3 on gender equality, with a higher education gender parity rate of 1.94.
- Qatar has managed to achieve Goal 4 of reducing child mortality by reducing the mortality of children under the age of 5 by two-thirds.
- Qatar has surpassed the target of reducing the maternal mortality ratio by three quarters.
- The State has managed to achieve the target under the Millennium Development Goal of eliminating malaria and other diseases.
- The State of Qatar has been able to achieve most of the targets of the Goal on ensuring environmental sustainability.

C. The State of Qatar in international indicators

13. As was pointed out earlier, the State of Qatar led Arab States with a rank of thirty-third in the world in the 2016 Human Development Report published by UNDP. The State of Qatar also ranked twenty-fifth globally and second among Arab States on the 2017-2018 Global Competitiveness Index. That Index measures the factors that contribute to advancing productivity and prosperity in 138 States around the world. The standards used to make that measurement included infrastructure, education, training, efficiency and size of labour market, and financial market development.

14. Qatar ranked second among Arab States and thirty-first globally in the 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index published by Transparency International. That organization publishes an annual report called the Corruption Perceptions Index that shows the grades and ranks achieved by States based upon perceptions on the prevalence of corruption in the public sector.

15. According to the 2016 report on the competitiveness of the Arab economies published by the Arab Monetary Fund, the State of Qatar ranked first among the Arab States in combating administrative corruption. That report stressed that the advanced ranking achieved by the State came as a result of Government efforts such as the establishment of the Rule of Law and Anticorruption Center. That Center has contributed to raising awareness and building awareness-raising partnerships in the area of combating administrative corruption. The report focuses on the extent to which individuals in public agencies achieve specific objectives, and the spread of administrative corruption in judicial authority. It also measures how serious the State is about fighting corruption.

16. Qatar was ranked first among Gulf countries and second in the Middle East and North Africa region according to the 2017 Basel Anti-Money Laundering Index, which classifies States according to money-laundering and terrorism-financing risks by evaluating how well such risks are being combated in each State.

17. The State of Qatar ranked second on the list of the world's 24 most secure States according to the annual report published in 2015 by the Swiss Golden Visa organization. According to that Swiss organization, the State of Qatar ranked first in three index categories: safety from terrorism (there are no terrorist attacks), unemployment and disaster risk.

18. The State of Qatar led Arab States with a rank of 30 on the 2017 Global Peace Index published by the Institute for Economics and Peace, which is devoted to the study of social peace and stability in the world's States. The classification depends on a number of criteria, including internal and external conflict, level of security, crime rate and military spending.

19. The State of Qatar ranked seventh worldwide among countries with the lowest crime rates according to the States crime according to the 2016 Global Crime Index. The Crime Index measures 117 States semi-annually. The State of Qatar ranked in last place in crime rates for the Middle East region in that Index.

20. The State of Qatar ranked first on the indicator for gender equality in business opportunities in the 2016 report of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, which is a pioneering international initiative to monitor and compare levels of entrepreneurship among 65 States. It is published by a number of prestigious universities, including Babson College. The State also ranked twelfth in the rate of early-stage entrepreneurial activity between genders.

21. For the second straight year, Qatar ranked eighty-third out of 190 States worldwide on the Ease of Doing Business Index published by the World Bank. Qatar maintained its ranking of eighty-third in 2017 despite the economic and political challenges it faced after having an oppressive siege placed on it on 5 June 2016.

D. The constitutional, political and legal structure of the State

22. In this regard, the present report refers to information contained in paragraphs 31 to 48 of the State party's previous report.

E. General framework for protecting and promoting human rights

23. In this regard, the present report refers to information contained in paragraphs 49 to 99 of the State party's previous report. The State would also like to provide the following updated information:

1. Legal safeguards for human rights

24. Since submitting the first report, the State party has worked to promote fundamental rights and freedoms that are guaranteed by the Constitution. It has adopted a number of national laws, including, but not limited, to the following:

- Law No. 15 of 2017 concerning domestic workers, which provides legal protection for such workers in line with the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and other relevant international norms;
- Law No. 1 of 2017 amending certain provisions of Law No. 21 of 2015, which regulates the entry and exit of migrant workers, concerning the freedom of individuals to leave the State;
- A law amending certain provisions of the Labour Code (Act No. 14 of 2004), approved by the Cabinet on 19 October 2016, that would provide for the establishment of one or more committees to issue rulings in connection with all disputes relating to the interpretation of the Labour Code or employment contracts;

- Law No. 16 of 2016 on mental health, which sets forth broad health care rights, including access to appropriate care in accordance with medically recognized standards, and respects the patient's autonomy and privacy;
- Law No. 13 of 2016 on safeguarding the privacy of personal data;
- The Civil Human Resources Act (No. 15 of 2016), which enshrines the principle of equality of rights and duties among employees without discrimination;
- Law No. 22 of 2015 amending certain provisions of the Criminal Code promulgated by Act No. 11 of 2004;
- Law No. 12 of 2015 amending certain provisions of Decree Law No. 17 of 2010 on the organization of the National Human Rights Committee, which strengthened the independence of the National Committee and provided robust legal safeguards and protections for the Committee and its members;
- Amiri Decree No. 6 of 2015 reorganizing the Administrative Control and Transparency Authority with a view to realizing higher standards of integrity and transparency in public posts and working to combat corruption in all its forms and manifestations;
- Law No. 1 of 2015 amending provisions of the Labour Code (Law No. 14 of 2004) regarding the protection of wages;
- Decision No. 18 of 2014 of the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, which determines the parameters of adequate housing for workers. The Decision complies with international requirements for workers' accommodation;
- The Cybercrime Act (No. 14 of 2014);
- Law No. 12 of 2013 amending certain provisions of Law No. 7 of 2007 on ruling on administrative disputes;
- Law No. 7 of 2013 on social health insurance, which aims to establish a mandatory health insurance scheme to ensure the provision of basic health services to all Qatari nationals, residents and visitors;
- Law No. 6 of 2013 on a health and education fund, which seeks to provide sustainable financial resources to support education and medical services, and the agencies providing them;
- Law No. 15 of 2011 on combating trafficking in persons.

II. Accession to international human rights treaties

25. With a view to strengthening the legislative framework for human rights, Qatar has acceded to and ratified a number of international and regional human rights treaties and conventions, as follows:

- The Arab Convention on the Protection of Copyright and Related Rights, in 2015;
- The International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, in 2014;
- The Arab Convention on Combating Money-Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism, in 2012;
- The Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, in 2009;

– The State of Qatar is currently looking into the possibility of ratifying other human rights instruments, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

III. Institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights

26. The State's concern for human rights has been borne out by the establishment of various governmental and non-governmental institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights, which are universal, interrelated and indivisible. These include the following:

- The Supreme Council for Family Affairs has been abolished. Its competences have been assigned to the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs. That Ministry concerns itself with improving the situation of, in keeping with the principle that there should be a supreme national Government agency concerned with the family and especially with women, in accordance with the comprehensive development vision contained in Qatar National Vision 2030. The Ministry's Department of Family Affairs has responsibility for everything relating to women's affairs. Its goal is to enhance the status and role of women in society, to advance women, and to maintain strong and cohesive families that adhere to moral and religious values and are an exemplary model. It contributes to implementing national strategies, plans and policies having to do with women. It is responsible for providing social care and laying out, developing and following up social development programmes in coordination with the relevant parties.

- The National Human Rights Committee received a certification status of A from the Geneva-based International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (ICC) or the first time in 2010. The Committee was granted a classification of A for national human rights institutions for a second time in 2015.

- The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking was established in 2016 with a view to coordinating national efforts to monitor and combat all forms of human trafficking. Its responsibilities include preparing a national plan on human trafficking and preparing and publishing an annual report on the country's efforts to combat human trafficking.

- The Qatar Foundation for Social Action, established in 2013, is a high-level institution whose board of directors oversees and monitors entities within the State that are active in the area of social work. It formulates and develops plans, programmes, policies and strategies aimed at furthering the objectives of civil society institutions and following up on their implementation, in cooperation and coordination with Government ministries and agencies and with public and private entities at home and abroad. It includes the following components: (1) the Social Protection and Rehabilitation Centre, which seeks to protect children and women from family violence, (2) the Family Counselling Centre, (3) the Centre for the Care of Orphans, (4) the Centre for the Empowerment and Care of the Elderly, (5) the Shafallah Centre for Persons with Special Needs, (6) the Social Development Centre and (7) the Best Buddies Qatar initiative.

- The Education Above All Foundation was founded in 2012 with a view to providing education to children in areas mired in poverty or affected by armed conflict.

- The National Committee for International Humanitarian Law, established pursuant to Cabinet decision No. 27 of 2012, provides recommendations to the Government on implementing and promoting respect for international humanitarian law.
- The Standing Committee on Emergencies, which was established by virtue of Cabinet decision No. 14 of 2011, prepares studies and develops plans and procedures to tackle disasters, provide prompt disaster relief, ensure safe transportation and communications, and develop and disseminate outreach plans through the media.
- A National Committee on Climate Change and Clean Development was established by virtue of Cabinet decision No. 15 of 2011. It seeks to follow up on the recommendations issued by meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol and to ensure implementation of commitments undertaken under the Convention and its Protocol.
- The National Committee for Occupational Health and Safety was established by virtue of Cabinet decision No. 16 of 2011. It proposes national policies, programmes and regulations on occupational health and safety.
- The Administrative Control and Transparency Authority was established by virtue of Amiri Decree No. 75 of 2011. It provides oversight, ensure transparency and integrity and combat corruption in all its forms and manifestations.
- The Qatar Committee for the Alliance of Civilizations was established by virtue of Cabinet decision No. 8 of 2010. It is intended to combat intolerance and instil the values of tolerance, solidarity and peace among the world's peoples, and furthering human development.
- The Silatech initiative was launched in 2008. It is intended to provide employment opportunities for Arab youth. The initiative has programmes in 16 Arab States.

IV. Developments at the level of policies and strategies

27. The State of Qatar has been devoting increasing attention to human rights. It that regard, it has taken legislative, legal, administrative and other measures to give effect to those rights and provides means to guarantee that they are established, developed and updated within an integrated social development framework. This concern for human rights is based on a number of national terms of reference, chief among them Qatar National Vision 2030, the first National Development Strategy 2011-2016 and the second National Development Strategy 2018-2022. There are also other sectoral strategies. Such terms of reference create a supportive and solid environment for upholding human rights in accordance with the approach called for by international treaties and conventions. Those policies and strategies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The Labour Market Sector Strategy 2011–2016, which strives to ensure that the workforce has the necessary skills and capacities to achieve national development priorities;
- The Family Cohesion and Women's Empowerment Strategy (2011–2016), which seeks to strengthen family cohesion, to rationalize the use of domestic labour, to reduce the number of cases of domestic violence and provide

protection and support to affected families, to support and empower economically and socially vulnerable families, to assist women in achieving an appropriate balance between their work-related and family responsibilities, and to empower women in all areas.

- The National Health Strategy (2017-2022) aimed at achieving better health, better care and better value;
- The National Strategy for Primary Health Care (2013-2018), which aims to address and treat future health challenges by providing a high-quality comprehensive healthcare system;
- The Education and Training Strategy (2011-2016), which aims to produce an education system that rises to the level of global education systems;
- The Social Protection Sector Strategy (2011-2016), which aims to renew commitment to Arab and Islamic values and principles, with a view to preserving Qatari family make it an axis of social development;
- The National Traffic Safety Strategy (2013-2022), which aims to bring about a reduction in victims of traffic accidents and reduce the annual death toll from such accidents;
- The National Autism Plan (2017–2021), which aims to develop a comprehensive and integrated approach in the provision of care to autistic individuals of all ages;
- The National Population Strategy of the State of Qatar (2017-2022), which aims to control the high population growth rate and limit the effects of changes in the population makeup, and includes a population policy that revolves around women and children, the primary goal of which is to support women's social participation and create conditions to increase their participation in the workforce, as well as to preserve family cohesion and ensure a safe environment for children.

V. Developments at the level of international cooperation

28. The State has continued to host international conferences and forums on development, democracy, human rights and the promotion of a culture of peace. The Government has convened the Doha Forum, the Conference on Interfaith Dialogue and the US-Islamic World Forum on an annual basis. The Government also hosted the Fourth Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations in 2011. It also hosted the Doha Meeting for Advancing Religious Freedom through Interfaith Collaboration in March 2014 within the context of the Istanbul Process for Combating Intolerance, Discrimination and Incitement to Hatred and/or Violence on the Basis of Religion or Belief. In 2015, Qatar hosted the thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, which culminated in the Doha Declaration. Qatar has, moreover, provided $49 million to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to implement its training programmes on the Doha Declaration; those training programmes will continue until 2020. In January 2016, Qatar hosted a regional conference on the role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in promoting and protecting human rights in the Arab region and, in April 2016, hosted the 2016 Asia Regional Forum on Business and Human Rights. In February 2017, it hosted an international conference on human rights approaches to confronting conflict situations in the Arab region.

29. Qatar hosts the United Nations Human Rights Training and Documentation Centre for South-West Asia and the Arab Region, which was established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/153. The Centre, which is located in Doha, endeavours to undertake training and documentation activities according to international human rights standards and to support such efforts within the region by Governments, United Nations agencies and programmes, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations. The Centre carries out its activities under the auspices of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

30. The State of Qatar tries to develop and improve its enforcement of human rights not only through strengthening constitutional protections and legal guarantees, but also through developing an institutional framework for promoting and protecting human rights, exchanging expertise with other States, and building national capacities through technical assistance provided by United Nations human rights mechanisms. All this has been confirmed by the open standing invitation to special procedures mandate holders. The Government hosted the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants in November 2013, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers in January 2014, a European Parliament Human Rights Subcommittee delegation in March 2014, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in January 2016. The State has also received numerous visits from non-governmental organizations concerned with human rights, including Human Rights Watch, which visited the country in 2012 and 2014, Amnesty International, which visited in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016, and the International Trade Union Confederation, which visited in 2014.

31. Qatar has contributed actively to the development of a global partnership for development. It is a major donor to, and a key partner in, international development initiatives and the provision of development aid and assistance is a key pillar of the country's foreign policy. In 2015, overseas assistance totalled 0.78 per cent of the country's GDP and was provided to more than 110 countries in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. Between 2012 and 2016, the Qatari Government provided a total of 14,765,695,287 Qatari riyals in development and humanitarian assistance.

32. The State, in addition to providing humanitarian and development assistance, also undertakes international humanitarian and development initiatives. The State has launched a number of initiatives, including but not limited to the following:

- The HOPEFOR initiative, since June 2010, which aims to improve the effectiveness and coordination of military and civil defence resources in order to respond to natural disasters;
- The Protecting Education in Insecurity and Armed Conflict initiative (formerly the Education Above All Foundation), which aims to protect, support and promote the right to education in current or potential zones of crisis, conflict and war;
- The Al-Fakhoora initiative, which aims to support and protect students and schools in conflict zones around the world, especially in Gaza;
- The Educate a Child initiative, a global initiative aimed at reducing the number of children around the world who are deprived of their right to education as a result of conflicts, wars and natural disasters, as well as children living in urban slums and remote rural areas, including groups that may face special challenges in obtaining an education, such as girls, persons with disabilities and minorities;

- The Qatari-Mauritanian Social Development Foundation, whose activities include programmes to eradicate illiteracy, particularly among children, by teaching and training them and by establishing micro enterprises to assist children;
- Establishment of the Qatar Development Fund, which aims to help Arab and other developing countries to develop their economies and implement relevant programmes.

F. Position of Qatar on reservations and declarations

33. When it acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the State of Qatar tried to make specific reservations and avoid general reservations or reservations on entire articles, in affirmation of its commitment to bring the provisions of that Convention into force.

34. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women offered recommendations the State party's initial report regarding the withdrawal of reservations to the Convention. It should be pointed out here that the State party has in recent years begun to implement a strategic policy with respect to general reservations with a view to reviewing them. Qatar decided to abandon completely the approach of general reservations when it acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and limited its reservations to specific items, giving its reasons for them. The State party decided not to withdraw or amend its reservations to the Convention at the present time. The State party will look into the possibility of reviewing them at a later date. The State party would like to refer to the declarations and justifications listed in the State party's initial report in this regard.

35. The State has taken a number of measures in the context of review of its reservations to the international conventions on human rights, including the following:

- The State party has withdrawn reservations to articles 21 and 22 in response to the recommendation of the Committee against Torture. It has replaced its general reservation to the Convention with a partial reservation to articles 1 and 16 of the Convention.
- The State party has withdrawn its general reservation to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, and has partially withdrawn its general reservation to the Convention on the Rights of the child regarding any provisions that may conflict with the sharia. The new reservation applies to articles 2 and 14 of the Convention, in response to the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

Part II
Monitoring implementation of the articles of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and compliance with the Committee's observations and recommendations

36. In this part, the report provides comments on articles of the Convention and compliance with the Committee's observations and recommendations on the State party's initial report. It also explains the constitutional and legislative framework for implementing the Convention, and provides institutional, procedural and statistical

information relating to the application of the Convention on the ground. Care has been taken to address the articles and recommendations with as little repetition is possible.

Articles 1 and 2: Qatar's approach to addressing discrimination and promoting gender equality

37. Greater and more in-depth attention is being paid to the social status of women in the legislative context. Laws and legislation in the State of Qatar have been evolving to support the cohesion of the Qatari family, protect its members, and preserve its traditional values while keeping pace with the progress and spirit of the age. In particular, human rights legislation has been updated and legislation protecting the rights of women has been introduced and developed. Qatari women have been able exercise all their rights, as is made clear by the following:

- Article 34 of the Permanent Constitution of the State provides that "citizens shall be equal in terms of public rights and duties". Article 35 provides that "all persons are equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination whatsoever on grounds of gender, race, language or religion".
- Article 23 of the Constitution guarantees the right to health for all, while Article 25 guarantees the right to education for all.
- The Qatari Constitution enshrines the right to vote. Article 42 provides that "the State guarantees to all citizens the right to vote and to stand for election in accordance with the law".
- The Qatari Constitution also enshrines the right to education. Article 49 provides that "all citizens have the right to education. The State shall endeavour to provide free compulsory general education in accordance with the laws and regulations in effect in the State."

38. In keeping with the commitment of Qatari legislation to the interests of women, a number of decisions and laws had been adopted that guarantee women's rights since the submission of the initial report. We mention the following:

- Amiri Decree No. 22 of 2017 provided for the appointment of four Qatari women as members of the Shura Council. That highlights the State's belief in the importance of the role of women in the State's legislative institutions and its support for women's rights as established in the provisions of the Constitution.
- The Civil Human Resources Management Act (No. 15 of 2016) contains provisions on equality between men and women in rights and duties.

39. In addition to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the State of Qatar has also acceded to a number of international conventions related to women's rights.[5]

Compliance with the recommendations on articles 1 and 2

Definition of discrimination against women

40. The Permanent Constitution is the overarching basis in the State for all other legislative instruments. Therefore, no legislative instrument may contravene the provisions of articles 34 and 35 on equality, which were mentioned above. The State's

[5] Please see paragraph 51 of our initial report (CEDAW/C/QAT/1).

legal framework, meaning the Constitution and national laws, is in line with the definition of discrimination against women provided in article 1, paragraph 1, of the Convention. Legislation sets forth provisions relating to gender equality as provided in the Constitution in order to ensure the compliance of all provisions of legislative instruments with the goal of achieving and guaranteeing such equality.

Review of laws and legislation

41. The State works on an ongoing basis to periodically update and develop its legislative framework in all areas. The State is committed to fulfilling all its international obligations arising from the international agreements and instruments to which it has acceded. It does so through a continual process of harmonization of national legislative instruments in the light of the provisions of such international and regional agreements and instruments. It should be noted that Amiri Decree No. 33 of 2000, as amended, regulates the process of drafting legislative instruments in the State. The task of harmonizing legislation is undertaken by the ministries and the relevant State agencies in coordination with the legislation department of the Cabinet Secretariat.

Article 3: Fundamental rights and freedoms

42. The State of Qatar has taken in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men. In looking at all the relevant legislative tools in force in the State of Qatar, we find that they are free of any conditions or circumstances that discriminate between women and men. In line with article 35 of the Constitution, all the laws mentioned above in paragraph 24 are devoid of any kind of discrimination between men and women.

43. The Qatar National Vision 2030 aims to build a society that promotes justice and equality. It embodies the principles enshrined in the Permanent Constitution of the State of Qatar, which protects public and private freedoms, promotes moral and religious values, customs, traditions and cultural identity and guarantees security, stability and equal opportunity. The National Vision is based on four pillars: human development; social development; economic development; and environmental development. The social development pillar of the Qatar National Vision envisions cohesive families that take care of their members and preserve moral and religious values, and human ideals. The National Vision promotes an effective social protection system that believes in civil rights for all Qataris and guarantees them a decent income to maintain a healthy life with dignity. The vision calls for improving the capacities of women in order to enable them to take part fully in the political and economic life of the State, especially in decision-making roles.

44. The State has adopted a number of measures at the political and procedural levels to guarantee the protection and promotion of women's rights including, but not limited to:

- It has established national mechanisms for women's issues, which have contributed to the realization of equal opportunities and equality at the level of policy-making and programme implementation.

- It has reviewed national legislation that discriminates against women and amended it in line with international instruments, and submitted draft laws that promote equal opportunity and are mindful of gender.
- It offers free legal and psychological rehabilitation assistance and provides shelters for women victims of violence.
- It has paid increased attention to disaggregation of statistics by sex.
- It has allocated budgets to implement programmes aimed at creating equal opportunities and equality.
- It has increased the proportion of women appointed to decision-making positions.
- It has incorporated a gender perspective into economic and social reform programmes.
- It has cooperated and shared information and best practices on women's empowerment and gender equality with various agencies involved women's affairs, such as the as the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

Compliance with the recommendations on article 3

Establishment of a Government unit for women's affairs

45. A Department of Family Affairs was created within the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs pursuant to Amiri Decree No. 4 of 2016, reflecting official concern about the need for a higher national Government body dealing with the family, and in particular women.[6]

46. In 2016 and 2017, the Department of Family Affairs conducted numerous initiatives and operational activities that were designed to protect and strengthen the rights of women. That included holding training workshops and programmes for productive families on developing household enterprises, taking part in heritage and national festivals, supervising a number of sales counters for productive families given permission by the sponsoring agencies, participating in relevant activities abroad, establishing a 2017 incentive award for productive families, and organizing family cohesion programmes to raise awareness of the role of values in the family.

47. The Qatar Social Work Foundation, which was established in 2013, is a high-level institution whose board of directors oversees and monitors State institutions and centres involved in social work.[7]

Promoting the vision of the Convention

48. The Centre for Legal and Judicial Studies at the Ministry of Justice is involved in training judges, prosecutors and assistant prosecutors, and other legal personnel at Government agencies to develop and update their theoretical and applied capacities and skills. It also trains judicial assistants and officers of the judicial police with a view to ensuring that they perform the tasks with which they are entrusted. It holds seminars and meetings, publishes journals and legal symposia, and holds training programmes of various kinds in coordination with officials of the Training Authority. As part of its compliance with the aforementioned recommendations, the Centre for

[6] See paragraph 26 of the present report.
[7] See paragraph 26 of the present report.

Legal and Judicial Studies has undertaken to develop training curricula and textbooks relating to human rights and the relevant international agreements and national legal instruments for trainees at the Centre in a secondary and periodic capacity for judges, prosecutors, attorneys and other legal personnel at all Government agencies in the State, as well as members of the police. That occurs through compulsory or specialized training courses.

49. The National Human Rights Committee organizes ongoing programmes to raise awareness of women's rights for both male and female students in schools and universities through training courses, workshops and seminars. In 2015 and 2016, the Committee held a number of symposia targeting female secondary and preparatory students. The Committee also organized a "legal clinic" with students of the Qatar University Faculty of Law to familiarize them with the Convention.

50. Civil society organizations, in cooperation with the National Human Rights Committee, organize ongoing training courses and workshops to promote implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Protocol on Human Trafficking, to raise awareness of the provisions of those conventions, and to train relevant personnel in law enforcement, prosecution, the courts and the police, as well as lawyers and media professionals. For example, in February 2016, the Committee provided a training course on the number of issues relating to human rights, including women's rights, for the Qatari Armed Forces General Command. In April 2016, it provided a workshop on national legislation, including legislation concerning women, and the perspective of the National Human Rights Committee on such legislation, aimed at law enforcement personnel in the police, the public prosecutor's office and the courts.

Article 4 Special procedures

51. Family and women-related policies are part of the integrated national social policy of the State of Qatar, alongside the other dimensions of human and social development. The integrated social policy of the State is supported by activities conducted by both the Government and civil society, which combine to promote social and human development that is economically and environmentally sustainable. In an environment of rapid modernization, both the first and second Development Strategies aim to realize Qatar's national vision of building a caring, cohesive and just society. Towards that end, the overall strategy is geared towards the creation of effective institutions and mechanisms to promote family cohesion, improve women's capacities, and contribute to women's empowerment.

52. The first and second National Development Strategies focus on the issue of women's empowerment. They particularly stress the issue of equality between men and women and the importance of overcoming stereotypes about the role of women in society with a view to helping advanced women's empowerment. They also focus on motherhood and childhood through the establishment of several programmes aimed at protecting motherhood.

Compliance with the recommendations on article 3

Achieving equality between men and women in the adoption of temporary special measures towards that end

53. Further to the information contained in paragraphs 137-141 of our initial State party report, the State of Qatar continues to stress the adoption of a clear policy of

promoting the advancement of women without discrimination in all fields. That is demonstrated by the issuance of Amiri Decree No. 22 of 2017, which provides for the appointment of four Qatari women as members of the Shura Council, thereby reflecting the belief of the State in the importance of the role of women in the State's legislative system and its support for women's rights as enshrined in the Constitution. Legislation regulating the labour market in the State of Qatar has also adopted an approach in line with the permanent Constitution. It is free of any negative discrimination against women. It does not provide for any differentiation between men and women in salaries or employee benefits. On the contrary, it provides for positive discrimination, as can be seen from Law No. 15 of 2016 promulgating the Civil Human Resources Act, and that Act's implementing regulations promulgated under Cabinet Decision No. 32 of 2016, which regulate public-sector employment in the State. That positive discrimination includes the following:

- Legislation grants women the right to the reimbursements and benefits due to a married employee, while their husbands receive them as unmarried employees, if the benefits due her are greater than those due to her husband.[8]
- A woman employee is granted paid leave if she has a child with special needs or an illness that requires the mother to stay close to the child.[9]
- A women employee is granted leave with full pay to be with her sick child if the child is admitted for treatment to any public or private hospital in the State.[10]
- A woman employee is granted maternity leave with full pay.[11]
- A woman employee is granted two hours per day for breastfeeding for a two-year period.[12]
- A woman employee whose spouse has passed away is granted a leave of 130 days, which is the mourning period prescribed by the Islamic sharia for the death of the husband. That leave is not deducted from her other vacation periods.[13]
- Women travelling for official duties or training courses have the right to the accompanied by a family member. The employer must pay the expenses of the accompanying family member.[14]

54. The Labour Code promulgated by Law No. 14 of 2004 is in line with article 35 of the Constitution. Its provisions are free of any negative discrimination on the basis of sex. On the contrary, any discrimination is positive, as is evident from the following:

- It grants women equal pay with men for the same work. They are given the same opportunities for training and promotion.[15]
- It grants women maternity leave with full pay.[16]

[8] See articles 19 and 20 of the implementing regulations of the Human Resources Act.
[9] See article 112 of the Human Resources Act.
[10] See article 88 of the implementing regulations of the Human Resources Act.
[11] See article 73 of the Human Resources Act.
[12] See article 83 of the implementing regulations of the Human Resources Act.
[13] See article 77 of the Human Resources Act.
[14] See article 86 of the Human Resources Act.
[15] Article 93 of the Labour Act (No. 14 of 2004).
[16] See article 96 of the Labour Act (No. 14 of 2004).

- It grants women one hour per day under the category of nursing break for one year at full pay.[17]
- Legislation prohibits the employment of women in work that is hazardous or arduous, or that is harmful to their health or morals, or in other types of employment specified by the Minister.[18]
- Legislation prohibits the employment of women during hours other than those specified by decision of the Minister.[19]

Article 5: Stereotypes

55. In addition to the information contained in the State party's initial report, paragraphs 142-184, attention is drawn here to the Social Protection Strategy 2017-2022, which works to meet the needs of social development by implementing strategic policies, programmes and mechanisms that help to promote social protection for all citizens and empower and equip various segments of society with the skills required to realize their freedom and ensure that they can enjoy their rights and live healthy, dignified and safe lives while maintaining the system of values and community culture. The Social Protection Strategy is based on the three pillars of social welfare, social capital and the Qatari family, which are the basis for determining the strategic priorities of the sector, which consist in achieving the following outcomes:

1. Establish an effective and sustainable integrated social welfare system;
2. Build a strong, cohesive and empowered Qatari family;
3. Increase the scope and effectiveness of social capital.

Compliance with the recommendations on article 5

Combating stereotypes of women

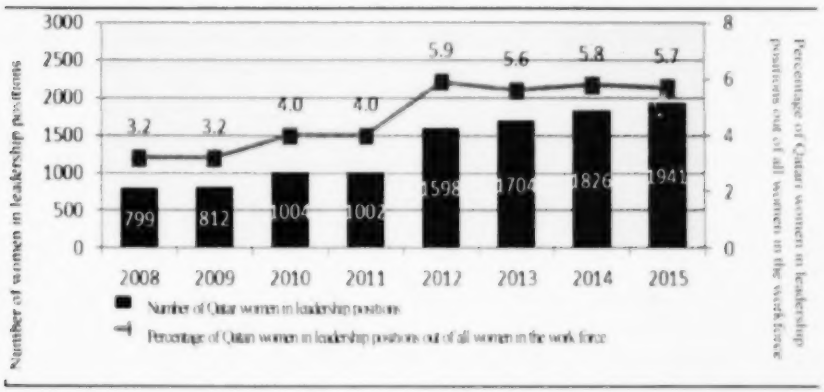
56. The State has taken a number of measures to combat stereotypes of women. The first National Strategy 2011-2016 included a programme on changing stereotypes within its family strategy. The State has worked hard to build the capacities of working women and advance them to leadership positions. The most important of the initiatives in that regard has been the inauguration by the Qatar Leadership Centre of training and comprehensive leadership capacity building for young leaders and future leaders for them to use in their workplaces. The programme offers services to women and men without discrimination. The second National Development Strategy (2017-2022) includes a proposal under the outcome heading "Strong, cohesive and empowered Qatari families". The proposal takes a proactive approach to overcoming challenges to gender equality, patriarchal attitudes and deeply ingrained stereotypes about the roles and responsibilities of women and men within the family and within society. It aims for the realization of a balance between a woman's family duties and professional responsibilities and to stop the perpetuation of stereotypes about the roles women and men.

57. Figure 4 shows the rise in the number of Qatari women in leadership positions between 2008 and 2012. Between 2012 and 2015, rates of participation of Qatari women in the workforce held steady at 36 per cent, even as considerable progress was achieved in improving the balance between women's work and life responsibilities

[17] See article 97 of the Labour Act (No. 14 of 2004).
[18] Article 94. of the Labour Act (No. 14 of 2004).
[19] Article 95 of the Labour Act (No. 14 of 2004).

following the review of the 2009 Human Resources Act. One aspect of this improvement in the supportive environment for working women can be seen in the sizable increase in the number of kindergartens and nursery schools. The number of Qatari children enrolled in kindergarten the nursery schools jumped from 65 per cent to 71 per cent between 2011 and 2015. The total number of women in legislative, senior management and director (leadership) positions in 2016 was 2030.[20]

Figure 4
Qatari women in leadership positions during the 2008-2015 period.



Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, Labour Force Survey, various years.

58. The State devotes considerable attention to conducting research and publishing studies on women's issues. It holds seminars and panel discussions on the subject. This effort is spearheaded by the Department of Family Affairs at the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, in its capacity as the institutional mechanism for women's affairs. Its research has included the subjects of violence against women, the obstacles facing women in attaining leadership positions in Qatari society, and political participation.

59. The Doha International Family Institute, since its founding in 2006, has served as an international policy institute devoted to increasing knowledge about Arab families and supporting the development of evidence-based policy. As a member of the Qatar Foundation, the Institute plays a vital role in efforts to build healthy and educated communities founded on cohesive families. The Institute has special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The Institute's mission is rooted in the Doha Declaration on the Family adopted at the 2004 Doha International Conference for the Family, which highlighted the commitment of the international community to supporting the family as the nucleus and essential building block of society. The Institute works to organize events at the national and regional levels with a view to disseminating a culture of women's rights and to combating stereotypes. It offers specialized programmes to help women strike a balance between their family roles and their professional duties. Such activities include, but are not limited, to the following:

- The second annual Family Policy Forum, held in 2017;

[20] Sample workplace survey report for 2016.

- The second International Conference on Family Research and Policy, held in 2016;
- The "My Voice, My Future," panel, held on International Women's Day 2016;
- The first International Conference on Family Research and Policy, held in 2015;
- The Doha International Conference on Empowering Families as a Path to Development, held in 2014;
- The launch of the annual Family Grant for scientific research on issues related to family policies;
- A panel discussion on "Work-family balance, social development and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: implementing policies while taking into account cultural specificity", held in 2016;
- A panel discussion entitled "Towards a better family-work balance in the States of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf" 2015, held in 2015;
- The first annual Family Policy Forum, held in 2016.

60. Promoting women's involvement in media is of crucial importance to combating stereotypes of women in society. The Qatar Media Foundation has taken on the mission of encouraging women to enter the media field and opening the door to women to freely choose whatever media specialty they wish. Recently, the Qatar Media Foundation has succeeded in attracting a large number of women for work in media, in the area of radio and television. The Foundation also encourages female employees to go into technical professions associated with the media field, with a view to achieving equality with men in professional rights and duties, and offers opportunities for training, qualification and development that have resulted in women rising to supervisory positions in that field.

61. The Qatar Media Foundation is committed to offering radio and television programmes about women in various pivotal areas, including women and sports, women's employment, marital life, living and the municipal elections, women's retirement, women and the liberal professions, and women in the media. It also presents reports on the achievements of the Qatari women on International Women's Day.

62. The Government believes firmly in the integral role of civil society organizations in raising awareness to address stereotypes of women. Here, we draw attention to the awareness-raising and educational services provided by the Aman Center, which is part of the Qatar Social Work Foundation. It has been working to counter stereotypes of female domestic workers and the types of violence that they are victims of. Educational activities include promoting familiarity with the State's laws, mechanisms and protection measures, and with the Centre's social and rehabilitative services. The internal regulations of the Qatar Social Work Foundation and its affiliated social work centres support empowering women and helping them to achieve a balance between their family roles and their professional duties. The Centre also contributes to the publication and dissemination of awareness-raising messages through social media networks, with a view to raising the awareness of society of the importance of women and their capacity to carry out their family and professional duties in a balanced fashion alongside men. The State also supports the Aman Center through the Government Contact Center of the Ministry of Transport and Communications by providing technical support for expanding access to services to all segments of society. That includes a dedicated hotline to receive reports of

violence against women and children. Mechanisms for access to the Centre include the Aman Center's external offices in hospitals and security agencies that can take in victims of violence directly. In recognition of the influential role played by the Qatar Foundation for Social Action, that Foundation has been granted consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

63. The Wifaq Center of the Qatar Foundation for Social Action also offers a guidance programme on reliance on domestic workers for raising children. That programme offers guidance on the management of family responsibilities and their division between husband and wife, with a view to raising awareness of the need for family members to fulfil their responsibilities, reinforcing family bonds within the household, and bringing about parental accord. The Center offers a number of awareness-raising activities to promote implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It offers a programme to promote balance between work and family responsibilities and change stereotypes about the roles of women and men within the family. That programme aims to spread knowledge of the skills needed to achieve the ideal balance between work and family, and of proactive approaches to dealing with work pressures with a view to achieving a balance between work and family.

64. For a year, since January 2017, Qatar Television, in cooperation with the National Human Rights Committee, has been broadcasting a weekly programme to raise awareness about persons with disabilities. A greater focus is being placed on the rights of women with disabilities, with a view to combating stereotypes about women with disabilities.

Combating violence against women

65. Domestic legislation, such as the Criminal Code promulgated by Law No. 11 of 2004, uses clear and precise terminology in formulating provisions on offences against physical integrity and offences involving indecent assault. It provides for harsher penalties if the offender is a family member or if the female victim is pregnant. Offences of libel and slander that cause psychological harm are also penalized. The Cybercrimes Act (No. 14 of 2014) also protects women by prosecuting anyone who disseminates or publishes information, images or audio or video recordings, even if they are genuine, that encroach on the sanctity of private or family life, or anyone who targets women with libel or slander. It criminalizes all such acts perpetrated by any person. Legislation also addresses the issue of violence against women in penitentiary and correctional institutions by providing for the protection and proper treatment of women and respect for their privacy as women. Provisions of that nature are contained in the Penitentiary and Correctional Institutions Act (No. 3 of 2009) and its implementing regulations.

66. The Hamad Medical Foundation has adopted a number of policies to combat the problem of violence against women. They require medical professionals to report suspected cases of violence, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, illegitimate pregnancy and violence against vulnerable groups, domestic workers and pregnant women.

67. The Community Policing Department of the Ministry of the Interior plays a preventive role with respect to victims of domestic violence. It provides support and assistance to victims through the Ministry's social support division, and empowers victims to gain justice in coordination with the competent judicial authorities in order to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable. It provides a hotline for early intervention to stop and prevent violence against women. In cooperation with the

Family Court, a special branch has established within the social support division for enforcement of decisions handed down by courts in domestic violence cases.

68. The Community Policing Department of the Ministry of the Interior is implementing programmes for police councils to serve the regions, in the belief that community members and regional inhabitants are the closest and most knowledgeable about which families are experiencing domestic violence. Four committees have been formed from inhabitants of northern regions work in cooperation with the community police in various areas, including domestic violence, and facilitate early intervention to prevent it before it occurs. Community police are also working to facilitate procedures and provide services through a national command centre. At the present time, there is an effort to standardize services offered via the hotline as a means to combat domestic violence in the field.

69. The Community Policing Department has also conducted a number of awareness-raising activities to prevent domestic violence. Those activities include taking part in events and research aimed at addressing the overall situation of women, and include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Preparation of the study on "Domestic violence in Qatar" in conjunction with Qatar University 2014;
- Organization of a round table on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, in conjunction with the Protection and Rehabilitation Center in 2015;
- Organization of a seminar on peaceful coexistence and the psychology of dialogue in 2017.

70. The Community Policing Department relies on a number of mechanisms for the protection of women, such as: enforcement of Family Court rulings; provision of social services for cases that arise; coordination of action by citizens, civil society institutions and specialized centres; assistance in seeking counselling services; organization of awareness-raising campaigns; encouragement for the peaceful resolution of family disputes; increased surveillance, police presence and community patrols in residential areas; support for studies and programmes on the protection of women; and monitoring of cases submitted by security departments and diverse bodies.

71. In order to confront abuse of women occurring within the family, the Wifaq Center works on taking preventive measures to strengthen family responsibility and avoid family disputes and any resulting abuse of either party to a marriage or any family member. One of its most notable ongoing development projects is the Strengthening of Family Ties Project, which is consistent with the family cohesion strategy. A diverse and comprehensive range of lectures and scientific and developmental interventions aimed at different segments of society have been provided on various social, educational, moral, behavioural and legal issues that have a bearing on family cohesion and the strengthening of family ties.

Article 6: Trafficking in women

72. Qatar has enacted legislation to deter human trafficking, including trafficking in women, not only because of its obligation under international conventions and laws, but also stemming from Islamic sharia, which is against prostitution and trafficking in women. Efforts made by the State party to combat human trafficking since submission of the initial report and in implementation of the recommendations

on that report may be summarized at the following three levels: national, regional and international.

I. The national level

73. The State has taken a number of legislative measures to combat trafficking in human beings at the national level, as follows:

- Cabinet Decision No. 15 of 2017 established the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking. It is chaired by a representative from the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, and its vice-chair is a representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Its membership includes representatives from each of following bodies: the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Public Health, the Office of the Public Prosecutor, the Government Communications Office, the National Human Rights Committee and the Qatar Social Work Foundation. The Committee was established with a view to coordinating national efforts to monitor, prevent and combat all forms of human trafficking. Among other things, its responsibilities include preparing a national plan on human trafficking, preparing and disseminating an annual report on the country's efforts to combat human trafficking, and acting in coordination with the agencies and authorities responsible for protecting and supporting the victims of human trafficking. A draft national plan on combating human trafficking for the 2017-2022 period has been prepared. The Arab Initiative to Combat Human Trafficking was launched in cooperation with the United Nations on Drugs and Crime and the League of Arab States in the period 2011-2014. Qatar provided $6 million towards building national capacities to combat human trafficking in the Arab region. The funds provided for training sessions for judges, investigators and police officers active in human trafficking cases. The sessions will come to an end in December 2017.
- Law No. 15 of 2011 on combating human trafficking criminalized human trafficking in all its forms and varieties.
- Through administrative and judicial police measures, the competent security agencies undertake the tasks of preventing and interdicting all crimes, including human trafficking offences.

74. In addition to the legislative measures mentioned above, an agreement has been reached with the Regional Office for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in Abu Dhabi to hold intensive training courses to enhance the capacities of staff of the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking and the national team at the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs.

75. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs is working to ensure comprehensive implementation of the provisions of human rights conventions related through coordination with institutions working in that field. The objective is to achieve the goals provided for in international instruments dealing with the family. The Government is working to disseminate information throughout Qatari society on the provisions of the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, particularly among children and parents, caregivers and those who work with children. In that context, and in order to spread knowledge about human trafficking, awareness of the risks it poses to Qatari society, and familiarize people with the varieties and forms that human trafficking can take, the Government has taken the following measures through its agencies:

- It organized training workshops for male and female social scientists in schools to protect our children from sexual harassment. The goal was to spread awareness in society of the ways in which harassers violate their victims and how to detect cases of harassment.
- It held a workshop entitled "Making youth aware of the risks of sex tourism".
- It held a workshop entitled "Mechanisms for protecting children from sexual exploitation".
- It has disseminated laws and conventions on combating human trafficking on websites and the Internet.
- It has launched an awareness-raising campaign under the slogan, "Making upcoming generations aware of the dangers of human trafficking" to deepen understanding of human trafficking and the need to combat it. The two-month campaign targeted male and female students at various grade levels.
- It staged presentations for male and female students of preparatory and secondary schools to raise awareness of human trafficking.

76. The National Human Rights Commission is organizing courses for Government agencies to raise awareness about combating human trafficking. In November 2017, in cooperation with the American Embassy in Doha, it organized a training session on monitoring and documenting cases of human trafficking, and coordination among the relevant agencies.

77. The State of Qatar has strengthened procedures and practices for protecting migrant workers from human trafficking as follows:

- It has strengthened the Labour Inspectorate buy increasing the number of labour inspectors to almost 400. It has also increased penalties and increased cooperation with grievance mechanisms, with a focus on occupational health and safety. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs is working in cooperation with the International Labour Organization to develop a national labour inspection strategy.
- Steps have been taken to penalize failure to comply with wage payment schedules. The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs suspends cooperation with employers and prohibits further recruitment of workers when there non-compliance with the wage protection system. It prepares a record of violations, which it turns over to the security services, and then to the Office of the Public Prosecutor for legal measures to be taken. In coordination with the Ministry of the Interior, workers at companies in violation of the wage protection system are transferred to another employer if wages are not paid. In addition, there was cooperation with the Office of the Public Prosecutor to be stricter with employers who violate the wage protection system, with a view to streamlining the process whereby workers can obtain what is owed to them.

The Government has taken a number of actions and measures to protect workers before they are recruited, including the following:

- The State has signed 36 bilateral conventions and 5 memorandums of understanding with labour-sending States in order to provide legal protection to migrant workers prior to recruitment.

- Employers and companies are required to use employment agencies approved by the Government and to coordinate with labour-sending States so that they can inform us which agencies are approved by them, and they can be supplied with a list of approved agencies in the State of Qatar with a view to ensuring that procedures for recruiting are safe and correct. Legal measures are taken against agencies in violation.
- The Ministry has launched a project for an electronic link, to be implemented by VFS Global, that will connect with several labour-sending States. The goal is to provide further protection to workers prior to being recruited by tightening control over recruitment practices in labour-sending States that might result in certain violations of workers' rights.
- The Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs monitors the work done by labour-recruitment agencies on behalf of other parties, and conducts periodic surprise inspections to make sure that migrant workers are not being exploited and that workers' rights are being upheld.

II. At the regional level

78. **The State has taken a number of legislative measures to combat human trafficking at the regional level, as follows:**

- It has cooperated with representatives of the Doha Regional Office of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to discuss ways to further develop the regional role played by the State of Qatar in combating human trafficking.
- The State of Qatar has adopted and supported the Arab initiative to build national capacities to combat human trafficking, which has been implemented in a partnership framework that includes the State of Qatar, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the League of Arab States. The initiative is intended to develop the Arab framework for combating human trafficking and to build and develop Arab capacities to combat it.

III. At international level:

79. The State has taken a number of legislative measures to combat human trafficking at the regional level, as follows:

- In December 2017 in Doha, in coordination with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking hosted the annual Global Conference on Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants.
- The permanent representatives of Qatar and of Greece were appointed co-facilitators for the high-level meeting of the seventy-second session of the General Assembly to coordinate efforts on combating trafficking in persons on the appraisal of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. A delegation from the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking took part in that meeting. That delegation was headed by His Excellency the Minister of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs, in his capacity as Chair of that Committee.
- The Government of the State of Qatar has contributed to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking in Persons. During 2015, 2016 and 2017, the amount was $400,000.

- From 8 to 12 May 2016, in coordination with INTERPOL, Ministry of the Interior organize a training workshop for police officers. The workshop was run by the INTERPOL anti-human-trafficking division with a view to building the capacities of participants with respect to international legal frameworks for combating trafficking and methods of identifying victims.
- From 12 to 19 April 2015, the State of Qatar hosted the Thirteenth United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. The Doha Declaration issued pursuant to that Congress stressed the need to promote and strengthen international and regional cooperation, and to take appropriate measures to prevent and combat the crime of trafficking in persons.
- The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking took part in the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.
- The Department for Liaison with Arab and International Police at the Ministry of the Interior is charged with strengthening regional and international security cooperation to deal with human trafficking crimes, as well as all other kinds of transnational crime.
- In cooperation with the Supreme Council for Communication and Information Technology, the Ministry of Interior and relevant international organizations, including INTERPOL, a workshop entitled "Human trafficking cybercrimes" was organized. The workshop sought to build awareness of the danger of human trafficking crimes on the Internet and the best international practices for combating cybercrimes involving human trafficking. It also developed practical capacities to monitor cybercrimes and use the latest technologies.

Article 7: Political life

80. The Qatari Constitution enshrines the right to vote. Article 42 provides that "the State guarantees to all citizens the right to vote and to stand for election in accordance with the law". Decree No. 38 of 2003 called on Qatari citizens, both male and female, to take part in a referendum on the Constitution and take part in establishing the country's Constitution.

81. The State of Qatar supports women in rising to positions of leadership and taking part in the public administration of the State. That includes exercising political rights such as the right to vote and the right to stand for municipal council elections in accordance with international standards. Decree No. 17 of 1998 on the system for electing municipal council members guarantees full equality between men and women in the right to vote and stand for municipal council elections. Some 69.8 per cent of registered voters taking part in the fifth round of elections for the Central Municipal Council that took place in 2015. The Ministry of the Interior is committed to encouraging citizens of both sexes to the part in the electoral process through advertising in various traditional and social media. The rate of women's participation in voting was 47 per cent. Women cast 6,826 votes out of a total of 14,670. Women also took part by running as candidates for the central Municipal Council. Two women were elected members of the Council in 2015. Table 3 shows political participation in elections for the Central Municipal Council according to sex for the past three rounds.

Table 3
Political participation in elections to the Central Municipal Council by sex during its four sessions from 2007 to 2015

Description		*Third term 2007*		*Fourth term 2011*		*Fifth term 2015*	
		Females	*Males*	*Females*	*Males*	*Females*	*Males*
No. of	Voters	13 608	14 531	16 331	16 441	9 704	12 031
	Voter turnout	7 054	6 905	6 120	7 486	6 826	7 844
	Candidates	3	113	4	97	5	131
	Candidates elected	1	28	1	28	2	27
Percentages	Voters	48.4	51.6	49.7	50.3	44.6	55.4
	Voter turnout	50.5	49.5	45.0	55.0	46.5	53.5
	Candidates	2.6	97.4	4.0	96.0	3.7	96.3
	Candidates elected	3.4	96.6	3.4	96.6	6.9	93.1

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, State of Qatar

82. National legislation enacted in recent years has sought to bolster women's rights, to eliminate discrimination between women and men, and to establish rules governing gender equality in diverse areas. Generic wording is used in national legislation when stipulating rights or determining obligations of persons to whom provisions are applicable, so that no distinction can made between men and women. Qatari women have occupied numerous senior posts and other supervisory leadership positions in the State. That includes ministerial positions in the Ministries of Health, Education and Information Systems, and deputy-minister, deputy-assistant and department-director positions in other Government ministries and agencies. Women have also assumed posts as judges and prosecutors.

Compliance with the recommendations on article 7

Adoption of temporary special measures to ensure the participation of women in the Shura Council

83. Amiri Decree No. 22 of 2017 provides for the appointment of four Qatari women as members of the Shura Council, thereby reflecting the belief of the State in the importance of the role of women in the State's legislative system and its support for women's rights as enshrined in the Constitution.

84. In addition to what has been noted above, on 14 November 2017, at the opening session of the forty-sixth Shura Council, His Highness the Emir directed that preparations be made for elections to the Shura Council, which marks the culmination of the Government's reform project for democratic participation, and comes as part of a series of steps intended to create a suitable environment for increasing such participation.

Article 8: International representation

Compliance with the recommendations on the article

Support for the empowerment of women

85. In addition to the information contained in the initial report, paragraphs 194 and 195, the State continues to support the empowerment of women to represent the

Government at the international level on an equal footing with men and without any discrimination. Tangible progress has been achieved at this level. The number of women occupying important leadership and decision-making positions, and taking part in international representation, has increased. The last few years have seen an increase in the number of Qatari women working in the diplomatic corps. During the 1996-2002 period, there was a total of 18 women members of the State's diplomatic Corps. By 2010, that number had risen to 38 diplomats. By 2017, the number of Qatari women attached to the diplomatic corps had risen to 90 women diplomatic personnel, including three diplomats of the rank of ambassador. The first female official spokesperson was appointed to the Qatari Ministry of foreign Affairs in 2017. She was the first Qatari woman to be appointed to that position. With that decision, the official spokeswoman of the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs thereby joined the ranks of the Qatari women occupying senior diplomatic or political positions.

86. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is committed to supporting and enabling Qatari women by encouraging them to join the diplomatic corps by provideing specialized training sessions in the field of diplomatic work. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has established a Diplomatic Institute that commenced operation in 2012. It functions as a training and qualification tool for the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Diplomatic Institute is responsible for the preparation, qualification and training of staff of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to work in the diplomatic and consular corps, and in international cooperation. It seeks to prepare them, provide them with the skills required for carrying out their tasks, and develop their theoretical and applied intellectual capacities through academic and training courses, and special qualification programmes.

87. The Diplomatic Institute works towards empowering and supporting women in representing the Government at the international level by offering courses and training programmes where women participate with men on an equal footing. Its activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Training programmes in diplomatic work for women administrative personnel with a view to granting them diplomatic ranks so they can carry out diplomatic missions abroad;
- Specialized programmes for female diplomats transferred abroad;
- Including women in seminars and meetings on diplomatic work;
- Arranging for women working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to visit major regional and international research centres and academies;
- Training courses in speaking and rhetoric, and in skills for handing the media.

88. Qatari women hold diplomatic posts in delegations abroad, and are members of numerous international organizations, particularly in the area of human rights and social development. Those include the following:

- United Nations Special Rapporteur on Disability (former);
- Special Envoy of the League of Arab States for Humanitarian Relief;
- Member of the Committee on the Rights of the Child;
- Member of the international Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (former);
- Member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (former).

89. Qatari women occupy senior leadership posts in civil society institutions and organizations. A number of women are members of the boards of directors of supreme councils and Government institutions and bodies. Women also serve as members of standing committees that develop policies and strategies — such as the Standing Committee on Population — and ad hoc committees that develop various legislation.

90. The subject of support for women's education in the fields of diplomacy and politics will be addressed when dealing with article 10 of the Convention.

Article 9: Nationality

91. Article 41 of the Permanent Constitution states: "The law defines Qatari nationality and the rules relating thereto. These rules have constitutional authority." The first article of the Qatari Nationality Act (No. 28 of 2005) defines who is a Qatari. Article 2 of that Act sets forth the conditions that must be fulfilled for a non-Qatari to be granted Qatari nationality. Those articles do not differentiate between men and women. We note the following:

- Articles 11 and 12 of the Act specify in general the cases in which nationality may be revoked or withdrawn, without discriminating between men and women in such situations.
- Article 18 of the Act prohibits the holding of Qatari citizenship in conjunction with any other citizenship, except by decree of His Highness the Emir. Acquisition by a Qatari of the nationality of another State results in the loss of Qatari nationality.
- Article 10 of the Act provides that a Qatari woman does not forfeit Qatari nationality if she marries a non-Qatari unless she acquires the nationality of the husband. In such a case, she may regain Qatari nationality if she relinquishes the other nationality.
- A naturalized Qatari woman citizen does not lose her citizenship upon the death of her husband or in case of divorce, unless she has married in violation of the provisions of the Law No. 21 of 1989 regulating marriage with foreigners or has regained or acquired another nationality. A husband changing his nationality during the marriage does not lead to a loss of Qatari citizenship by the wife. That is not listed in the law as one of the reasons or conditions for loss of citizenship.

Compliance with the recommendations on nationality

92. Although Qatari law does not treat men and women equally when it comes to granting nationality to their children, it does give priority to the children of Qatari mothers for the acquisition of Qatari nationality by naturalization, under the provisions of article 2.

93. When it comes to reviewing and amending nationality laws, it should be pointed out that the provisions of the nationality law have constitutional force under article 41 of the Constitution. Therefore, the procedures required to amend those laws are analogous to the procedures required to amend provisions of the Constitution. They are more complicated that the procedures required to amend other laws. Moreover, the amendment of provisions relating to this issue would necessitate looking into amending other relevant laws, such as the law regulating marriage to foreigners. It should be noted that the State of Qatar has taken several measures in this regard, including the following:

- A working group has been formed from the relevant Government agencies to study the provisions of the Nationality Act and related laws. It is looking into amending the Act to include provisions that guarantee equality between the children of a Qatari woman married to a foreigner and those of a Qatari woman married to a Qatari when it comes to acquiring Qatari citizenship. The working group will submit its findings in this matter to the highest officials in the State.
- At its meeting on 2 August 2017, the Cabinet approved the draft Permanent Residency Card Act, which will allow the children of Qatari women married to non-Qatari men, non-Qataris who have performed great services for the State and non-Qataris with special skills required by the State to acquire permanent residency. In accordance with the implementing decisions that will be promulgated by the Cabinet pursuant to that Act, individuals holding permanent residency cards will enjoy a number of privileges in the fields of education and health care, as well as privileges related to military and civil service appointments and the right to own property. The Act also provides for the establishment of a standing committee within the Ministry of the Interior, named the Permanent Residency Card Granting Committee, to consider permanent residency card applications in accordance with the provisions of that Act.
- A legislative amendment has been proposed to the provisions of Law No. 21 of 1989 regulating marriage with foreigners that allows children of Qatari women married to foreigners to own real estate that has come to them through inheritance. That amendment is still undergoing legislative procedures.

Article 10: Education

94. Education is one of the main pillars of gender equality in the State of Qatar. The State is committed to the achievement of gender equality and parity in enrolment in education and in benefiting from all the various opportunities that it provides. That commitment is clearly reflected in the legislation and strategies adopted by the State, which are free of any kind of discrimination whatsoever.

95. Amiri Decree No. 25 issued in September 2001 made education compulsory for all children on the State's soil from the primary level through the preparatory level, or until the age of 18, whichever comes first. Table 4 shows the percentage of females in the compulsory levels of education from 2012 to 2016.

Table 4
Percentage of females in the compulsory stages of education for the period 2012–2016

Academic year	*Female students in the primary level*	*Female students in the preparatory level*	*Total females in the compulsory levels of education*	*Total students at primary level*	*Total students at the preparatory level*	*Total students at the compulsory levels of education*	*Percentage of females*
2015–2016	67 716	26 131	93 847	138 715	53 052	191 767	48.94
2014–2015	63 098	24 431	87 529	129 301	49 781	179 082	48.88
2013–2014	57 027	22 603	79 630	116 721	46 029	162 750	48.93
2012–2013	51 896	20 664	72 560	105 942	42 328	148 270	48.94

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Education Policies and Research, Statistics Division, 2017.

96. The table shows the relative stability of the enrolment percentage of women in compulsory education. It is close to the enrolment percentage for males. Table 5 shows the percentage of students at the secondary level by sex, type of school and year. It should be borne in mind that that level is still not compulsory under the aforementioned Amiri Decree.

Table 5
Percentage of students at the secondary level, by sex, type of school and year for the period 2012–2016

	Secondary level					
	Government schools		*Private schools*		*Total Government and private schools*	
Academic year	*Males %*	*Females %*	*Males %*	*Females %*	*Males %*	*Females %*
2015/2016	49 3	50 7	45 9	54 1	47 9	52 1
2014/2015	48 0	52 0	46 0	54 0	47 1	52 9
2013/2014	48 4	51 6	45 6	54 4	47 2	52 8
2012/2013	48 0	52 0	45 1	54 9	46 9	53 1

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Education Policies and Research, Statistics Division, 2017.

97. It is clear from table 5 that the percentages of females in Government and private schools was greater than 50 per between 2012 and 2015. That is a high indicator that reflects the fact that females in the State of Qatar stay in school for the duration of their education all the way through the secondary level even though there is no law making education at that level compulsory.

98. With regard to specialized vocational educational opportunities available to female students in the State of Qatar, a Qatar School of Banking Studies for Girls was opened in the academic year 2015-2016. It offers specialized high-quality education in the area of banking and business administration with a view to qualifying female human resources and integrating them into the economic sector. Those women will then be qualified to apply to universities to study business administration and banking, or put themselves on the banking jobs market. There is a plan to open other technical and specialized schools that match the inclinations and tendencies of young women, such as a school of science and technology.

99. The State has taken a number of measures to encourage women to enrol in such specialized vocational education. We draw attention to the following:

- Financial allocations have been set aside for female students as an incentive to enrol.
- Annual awareness campaigns are conducted to make female students at the preparatory level aware of the programmes offered by such schools and encourage them to enrol in this type of education.
- There is a commitment to provide jobs for female graduates after their schooling.

Table 6

Percentage enrolment of Qatari female students at the Qatar Secondary School of Banking Studies and Business Administration for Girls for the academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018

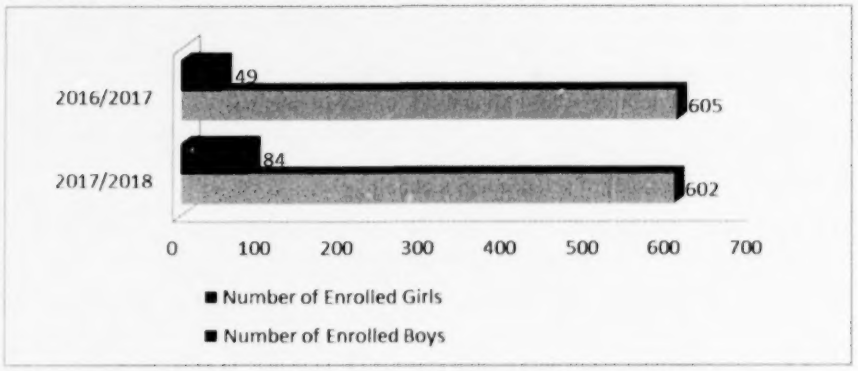
Number of students in the Qatar Secondary School of Banking Studies and Business Administration	*Academic year*	
	2016-2017	*2017-2018*
Number of males enrolled	605	602
Number of the males enrolled	49	84
Total	**654**	**686**
Percentage enrolment of Qatari females enrolled in the Qatar Secondary School of Banking Studies and Business Administration for Girls	7%	12%

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Education Policies and Research, Statistics Division, 2017.

100. Table 6 and figure 5 show that the enrolment percentage of Qatari female students in Qatar in banking studies and business administration at the secondary level during the 2017-2018 academic year. At 12 per cent out of a total of 686 students enrolled, it was an increase relative to the enrolment percentage of Qatari female students during the 2016-2007 academic year, which was 7 per cent out of a total of 654 students.

Figure 5

Percentage enrolment of Qatari female students at the Qatar Secondary School of Banking Studies and Business Administration for Girls for the academic years 2016–2017 and 2017–2018



Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Education Policies and Research, Statistics Division, 2017.

101. At the university level, Qatar University grants females the same opportunities as males to choose their university specialization, provided that the common standards for both sexes are met. There are some university faculties that are currently only accepting females, such as health and pharmaceutical studies, owing to the needs of the State based on the particularities of the labour market.

102. The following table shows the fields in which students have received scholarships to study academic specializations abroad, broken down by gender. We note that more female students are going abroad to study academic specializations than males for more than one discipline. That illustrates the commitment of the State to gender equality in scholarship opportunities, particularly in the academic specializations that are considered vital and important fields for the State.

Table 7
Numbers of students send abroad to study scientific and professional specializations from the 2005–2006 academic year to the 2017–2018 academic year, by gender

Scholarship field (discipline)	*Number of females*	*Percentage of females*	*Number of males*	*Percentage of males*
Agriculture, agriculture processes and related sciences	8	80.0	2	20.0
Architecture and related arts	24	58.5	17	41.5
Biological and medical sciences	46	71.9	18	28.1
Chemistry	2	100.0	0	0.0
Communications technology and support services	9	69.2	4	30.8
Information and computer sciences, and support services	176	47.8	192	52.2
Engineering	522	31.2	1 149	68.8
Engineering and technology	15	20.0	60	80.0
Health posts and related medical sciences	150	75.0	50	25.0
Mathematics and statistics	4	66.7	2	33.3
Mechanical technology	1	100.0	0	0.0
Medicine	54	64.3	30	35.7
Natural resources and conservation	4	66.7	2	33.3
Nursing	5	100.0	0	0.0
Science technology	3	37.5	5	62.5

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Scholarships, 2017.

103. There are no discrepancies between men and women in conditions for appointment of the teaching staff. As part of its efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, especially in the field of education, the State of Qatar is committed to empowering qualified women to go into school administration. Women have achieved percentages that exceed those of men in this area. That is illustrated by table 8, which shows the percentage of female school principals compared the percentage of male principals by year.

Table 8
Percentage of female school principals compared to the percentage of male school principals by year for the period 2012-2016

	School principals			
Academic year	*Females*	*Males*	*Total*	*Percentage of women*
2015/2016	254	127	381	66.6

	School principals			
Academic year	*Females*	*Males*	*Total*	*Percentage of women*
2014/2015	283	144	427	66.2
2013/2014	199	100	299	66.5
2012/2013	210	88	298	70.4

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Education Policies and Research, Statistics Division, 2017.

104. As part of its efforts to provide high-quality specialized training and professional development opportunities, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the State of Qatar has opened a specialized centre for training and development. It is committed to the principles of the Qatar National Vision 2030, which guarantee security, stability, equality of opportunity, and increased opportunity and professional support for women. That training and development centre is also committed to all the provisions on training contained in articles 10 through 14 of the Convention. It is committed to providing high-quality training opportunities to all citizens, according to each individual's competences, capacities and aspirations, without regard to sex. There are also special programmes for women, including early childhood programmes. There are also programmes that promote equality between men and women with the same educational level or job title.

105. The proportion of female trainees was 74.3 per cent versus 25.7 per cent for males enrolled in training programmes offered by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education during the years 2006 to 2016. To take just one example, for the 125 training programmes and workshops offered during the academic year 2016-2017, 4307 out of 6272 trainees were women, or 68.7 per cent.

106. Educational curricula play a major role in instilling the foundations of gender equality at both the theoretical and practical level. The pedagogical approach is not limited to textbooks and syllabuses. It extends to all the elements and tools that affect students' learning and influence their behaviour, mindset, values and tendencies. That includes the school environment, the education programme, teaching methods, assessment activities, etc. The effort to influence the mindsets of students and attitudes towards relationships with the opposite sex, and to reinforce the idea of equality between the sexes does not stop with including lessons explicitly promoting that idea in textbooks. It requires a comprehensive vision that sends messages via all elements of the curriculum at an age-appropriate level for both male and female students. Efforts to influence attitudes and behaviours are coming to rely more and more on living practical models rather than on theory, advice and guidance. The State of Qatar has made great strides in instilling the idea of gender equality by encouraging girls' education and increasing the numbers of women graduates in the various disciplines.

107. In implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and specifically in implementation of article 10 thereof, increased efforts will be made to instil the idea of gender equality in educational curricula as follows:

- Gender equality in school curricula, assessment methods, and various school activities;

- Emphasis on the ideas of equality between men and women in different areas of life;
- Efforts to reduce school dropout rates for female students by including material on the role of women in building a prosperous society;
- Programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;
- Gender equality in participation in various kinds of activities and competitions domestically and abroad, including sports and athletic events.

108. National educational materials in the Arabic language include, but are not limited to, the following: affirmation of the status of women and their equal partnership with men in humanity, rights and duties by studying the biographies of prominent ancient and modern women; studying texts that talk about gender equality; studying women's literature through the works of Arab women writers and poets.

109. The Islamic educational curricula for the secondary level through grade 12 includes lessons with titles that encapsulate clearly the concepts of equality and the elimination of discrimination against women. That includes lessons on gender equality, the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, and the rights of women and their role in the development of society. That reflects the commitment of educators in the State of Qatar to empowering students with these concepts in a systematic and educational way.

110. The system of assessment and examinations in of the State of Qatar is based on the principle of gender equality. That extends to policies and guidelines for the assessment of students; examination schedules and dates; the specifics of primary school examinations, high school diploma examinations and national examinations; exam grading procedures; provision of results; and the issuance of diplomas.

111. In terms of education infrastructure, the State of Qatar attaches great importance to providing Government schools meeting the latest global specifications for both sexes, in line with the needs of students to learn without discrimination. That is confirmed by the percentages of girls' schools shown in table 9, which is almost the same as the number of Government schools for boys.

Table 9
Percentage schools for females compared with percentage of schools for males in the State of Qatar

	Government schools		
Academic year	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Percentage of girls' schools*
2015/2016	93	96	49.2
2014/2015	89	90	49.7
2013/2014	87	87	50
2012/2013	88	90	49

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Education Policies and Research, Statistics Division, 2017.

112. The policy of the State of Qatar on scholarships is characterized by equality and transparency. There is no discrimination between students in access to scholarship opportunities and choosing a discipline. On the contrary, both males and females are encouraged to enrol in all disciplines in accordance with the needs of the State and

the students' own intellectual inclinations and talents. When it comes to scholarships, focus is on the needs of the labour market for particular disciplines without regard to the sex of the applicant.

113. Table 10 shows statistics on the numbers of students accepted for scholarships according to sex and year of acceptance for the past five years It is clear from the table that the percentages of female students receiving scholarships to go abroad has been high, and almost equal to the percentage of male students receiving scholarships to go abroad, especially during the 2017–2018 school year, for which statistics are the most recent.

Table 10
Statistics on the number of students accepted for scholarships according to sex and year of acceptance for the past five years

Academic year	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*	*Percentage of women*
2017/2018	232	227	459	49.4
2016/2017	513	454	967	46.9
2015/2016	692	586	1 278	45.8
2014/2015	646	598	1 244	48.1
2013/2014	732	661	1 393	47.5

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Scholarships, 2017.

114. As part of the diligent efforts of the State of Qatar to disseminate a culture of excellence in science and learning for all students, female and male, it has established an Academic Excellence Day. His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar makes sure to honour outstanding students of both sexes, express appreciation for them, meet with them and hear their intellectual and practical views and aspirations. He encourages them to contribute constructively to national renewal by arming themselves with knowledge. The table below shows the award categories and the percentage of females in each category for the tenth round of awards. It demonstrates the striking domination by females among winners in most categories.

Table 11
Scientific excellence award categories classified by sex during the tenth session (2017)

	Tenth round 2017 (2016–2017)			
Category	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*	*Percentage of women*
Primary level students	5	15	20	75
Preparatory level students	1	1	2	50
Secondary school students	2	7	9	78
University students	2	6	8	75
Outstanding scientific research	0	2	2	100
Outstanding teacher	1	1	2	50

Tenth round 2017 (2016–2017)

Category	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*	*Percentage of women*
Doctorate holders	0	2	2	100
Outstanding school	0	1	1	100

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Education Policies and Research, Statistics Division, 2017

115. The State of Qatar devotes great attention to study and learning opportunities for all segments of society, including adults, both men and women. The literacy rate is an important indicator for determining the proportion of adults who can read and write well enough to conduct simple day-to-day interactions in their lives.

Table 12
The literacy rate among adults aged 15 years and older for the years 2001–2015

Year category	*Percentage of males*	*Percentage of females*	*Overall percentage*	*Percentage of gender equality*
2001	89.6	86.5	88.7	0.96
2005	93.6	87.5	90.6	0.93
2008	94.3	92.7	94	0.98
2012	96.9	95.8	96.7	0.99
2013	97.9	97.1	97.5	0.99
2015[21]	98.4	98.3	98.4	1

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Education-for-All National Report for the State of Qatar 2000-2015, July 2014

116. It should be evident from table 12, that the literacy rates for both males and females are increasing year after year, and are already quite high. The table shows that there is virtual equality between male and female adult learners in literacy rates. These results point to a notable improvement and rise in literacy rates that reflects the attention being paid by the State of Qatar to adult education for both sexes without discrimination. Table 13 shows the number of students in adult education and literacy education by sex during the period 2001-2013.

Table 13
Number of male and female students enrolled in adult education and literacy education by sex, units that level, 2001–2017

Academic year	*Sex*	*Unit 1*	*Unit 2*	*Unit 3*	*Unit 4*	*Total*	*Preparatory level*	*Secondary level*	*Total*
2001/2000	Males	93	63	91	109	356	624	947	1 927
	Females	116	63	91	45	315	208	421	944
Total		**209**	**126**	**182**	**154**	**671**	**832**	**1 368**	**2 871**

[21] The Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, Qatar in numbers, 2016

Academic year	*Sex*	*Unit 1*	*Unit 2*	*Unit 3*	*Unit 4*	*Total*	*Preparatory level*	*Secondary level*	*Total*
2007/2008	Males	27	31	52	71	181	578	1 043	1 802
	Females	55	68	61	49	233	169	264	666
Total		**82**	**99**	**113**	**120**	**414**	**747**	**1 307**	**2 467**
2013/2012	Males	61	38	67	80	246	891	1 867	3 004
	Females	251	139	107	116	613	418	749	1 780
Total		**312**	**177**	**174**	**196**	**859**	**1 309**	**2 616**	**4 784**
2017/2016	Males					381	1 267	2 766	4 414
	Females					1072	946	1943	3 961
Total						**1 453**	**2 213**	**4 709**	**8 375**

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the national Education-for-All report for the State of Qatar 2000-2015, July 2014; Education Statistics Bulletin for the month of May for the 2016-2017 school year.

117. Table 13 shows that the total number of male and female adult learners enrolled in the base year 2001 was 2871. That included 1927 males, or 67.1 per cent, and 944 females, or 32.9 per cent. The total number of male and female students in 2013 was 4784. That included 3004 males, or 62.8 per cent, and 1780 females, or 37.2 per cent.

118. These statistics indicate that there are more males enrolled in adult education and literacy education (parallel education) than females. That is probably due to the demographic composition of the population of the State of Qatar, which has more males than females because of the migrant workers who come to the State. There is also a greater chance that males will abandon their studies at one stage or another to go on the job market, after which they might resume their studies at a later date.

119. The female turnout increased in 2015-2016, exceeding that of males for the first time, at 61 per cent. That is a good upward indicator. Table 14 shows rates of enrolment in adult education (parallel education) by sex for the years 2012–2016.

Table 14
Rates of enrolment in adult education (parallel education) by sex for the years 2012–2016

Year	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*	*Percentage of women*
2015/2016	860	1 318	2 178	61
2014/2015	3 699	2 588	6 287	41
2013/2014	3 248	1 715	4 963	35
2012/2013	3 004	1 780	4 784	37

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Education-for-All National Report for the State of Qatar 2000-2015, July 2014.

Higher education

120. Qatari women have assumed major roles at national universities. Qatar University provides equal opportunities for appointment as faculty members to all

Qataris according to standards of qualification and ability, without regard to sex. Table 15 shows that the percentage of faculty members who are Qatari women is close to the percentage of faculty members that are Qatari men across the various faculties of Qatar University. The percentage of Qatari women on the faculty of Qatar University from the academic year 2013-2014 through the academic year 2016-2007 was higher than the percentage of faculty members that were Qatari man. The percentage accounted for by Qatari women. In 2016-2017 was around 53.3 per cent of total faculty members.

Table 15
The number of members of the teaching faculty of Qatar University by sex and nationality (Qatari versus non-Qatari) from the academic year 2011–2012 to the academic year 2016–2017

		2011–2012	*2012–2013*	*2013–2014*	*2014–2015*	*2015–2016*	*2016–2017*
Qataris	Males	87	86	80	85	86	92
	Females	89	83	81	95	90	105
	Total	**176**	**169**	**161**	**180**	**176**	**197**
Non-Qataris	Males	350	394	509	610	659	663
	Females	115	124	146	158	169	178
	Total	**465**	**518**	**655**	**768**	**828**	**841**
Grand total		**641**	**687**	**816**	**948**	**1 004**	**1 038**

Source: State of Qatar, Qatar University, strategy development and sector, 2017.

121. Women occupy leadership positions at Qatar University on an equal footing with men, reflecting the principles of merit and gender equality. A woman was President of Qatar University for over a decade, a period that saw numerous outstanding achievements, including expansion through the opening of new faculties and the granting of academic accreditation to more than one programme of studies. Currently, women at Qatar University occupy a number of high-level leadership posts, including vice-president of the university. Women also serve as the deans of several faculties and the assistant deans of several others, as is shown in the table below.

Table 16
Leadership positions in Qatar University from 2011–2012 through 2016–2017 by functional title and sex

	President of the University		*Vice-President of the University*		*Assistant Vice-President of the University*		*Dean*		*Assistant Dean*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
2011–2012	0	1	4	1	0	0	4	3	2	1
2012–2013	0	1	5	0	2	0	5	2	6	0
2013–2014	0	1	5	0	5	1	5	2	11	2
2014–2015	1	0	6	0	11	4	6	2	51	3
2015–2016	1	0	6	1	1	0	8	1	22	5

	President of the University		*Vice-President of the University*		*Assistant Vice-President of the University*		*Dean*		*Assistant Dean*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
2016–2017	1	0	6	1	2	0	8	1	12	6
2017	1	0	6	1	2	0	8	1	16	9

Source: State of Qatar, Qatar University, Strategy and Development Division, 2017.

122. Qatar University has continued to devote attention to teaching curricula that deal with human rights, international relations, international human rights organizations and international humanitarian law. In 2016, Qatar University signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Human Rights Committee to promote joint research, training and education initiatives that can promote, strengthen and protect human rights. The Ahmed bin Mohammed Military College of the Qatari Armed Forces offers a human rights curriculum. The College also organizes student field visits to the relevant institutions, such as the National Human Rights Committee, the Prisons Division, and migrant worker worksites, all as part of its field training in human rights.

123. Qatar University adheres to the principle of gender equality in its admissions policies. That is demonstrated by the admissions percentages in the table below for the University's various faculties. Females have high rates of acceptance, surpassing those for males in some faculties and some years. In the light of the pressing need of the State for females in the health care field, Qatar University has opened faculties that accept females exclusively, such as the College of Health Sciences and the College of Pharmacology.

Table 17
Admission percentages for Qatar University colleges from 2014th 2017, disaggregated by gender

	2014–2015		*2015–2016*		*2016–2017*		*Fall 2017*	
Faculty	*Males (%)*	*Females (%)*	*Males (%)*	*Females (%)*	*Males (%)*	*Females (%)*	*Males (%)*	*Females (%)*
College of Arts and Sciences	49	54	48	48	66	57	75	69
College of Management and Economics	46	61	39	55	56	57	49	53
College of Education	22	69	6	53	69	68	50	61
College of Engineering	39	59	39	57	38	50	53	53
College of Health Sciences	0	0	0	0	0	43	0	42
College of Law	64	67	49	56	66	54	58	58
Medical college	0	0	17	24	24	27	19	19
College of Pharmacology	0	22	0	40	0	37	0	48

Faculty	2014–2015		2015–2016		2016–2017		Fall 2017	
	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)	Males (%)	Females (%)
College of Sharia and Islamic Studies	21	54	22	28	32	62	46	66
Not specified	41	78	80	93	70	76	59	47

Source: State of Qatar, Qatar University, Strategy and Development Division, 2017.

124. In the context of the commitment of the Qatar University to achieving gender equality in all fields, females at Qatar University have the same opportunities as males to receive scholarships to complete advanced studies. The table below shows that females significantly outstripped males in obtaining scholarships to complete doctoral programmes between 2013 and 2017.

Table 18
Students receiving scholarships from Qatar University for advanced studies, disaggregated by gender and programme from 2013-2014 to 2016-2017

Year	Sex	Master's degree	Doctorate
2013–2014	Male	8	3
	Female	15	8
2014–2015	Male	9	15
	Female	25	13
2015–2016	Male	9	16
	Female	26	14
2016–2017	Male	9	25
	Female	35	24

Source: State of Qatar, Qatar University, Strategy and Development Division, 2017.

Equal participation in sports activities

125. The State continues to instil the idea of gender equality in sports activities. Educational institutions set aside classes for physical education for both sexes without distinction at all levels of education. All school buildings have gymnasiums equipped with the latest athletic equipment and devices, so that students of both sexes can engage in the activities they wish to without discrimination.

126. The Qatar Olympic Committee has made great efforts to encourage women to take part in athletic activities. The Qatar Olympic Committee respects the principle of equality between men and women in all the activities that it organizes or sponsors in Qatari society. That requires taking into account the specificities of women in some cases. There are women's teams for team sports such as handball, football and basketball. The Olympic Committee organizes a number of programmes for women, including physical fitness and community activities for girls and women, on an equal footing with programmes for men. The State sends a women's delegation to the Asian Games.

127. The State pays attention to and actively supports the advancement of women's sports. That has required the formation of a Women's Sports Committee, which is a

member of the general assembly of the Qatar Olympic Committee, as are all national sports federations. The Qatar Olympic Committee makes great efforts to support the activities of the Women's Sports Committee, which aims to advance women's sports to the highest levels by hosting regional and international sports events. The most recent of those was the Gulf Cooperation Council Women's Games, which was hosted in Doha during the first half of 2017. The Olympic Committee organizes awareness-raising campaigns on a periodic basis with the help of the Women's Sports Committee. The Committee strengthens women's capacities by including them on organizational committees at all levels. Recently, Qatari women have been playing an important role by assuming leadership and support positions on the staff of the Qatar Olympic Committee.

128. The Qatari Women's Sports Committee works to advance women's sports and elevate their performance by achieving several objectives. Those objectives include supporting women's sports and Qatar, increasing women's participation in athletic activities, and creating athletic awareness of the importance of women engaging in sports. It also works to promote participation by Qatari women in athletic seminars, studies and conferences at all levels, domestically and abroad; raise the technical and administrative level of women's activities in Qatar in the context of the general plan of the Qatar Olympic Committee; create communications channels with domestic and foreign sports entities and organizations in order to develop domestic women's sports activities; and assist agencies involved in women's athletic affairs in the state to carry out their mission and remove obstacles that might obstruct their work.

Education spending

129. The State of Qatar continues to invest intensively in the education and training sector, which it consistently treats as one of the most important areas of government spending. Spending on education accounted for approximately 10 per cent of government expenditures in the years 2016 in 2017. That was slightly less than the percentage of expenditures going to education in the year 2015. The reduction in investment spending is due to the fact that most of the major education infrastructure projects were in their final stages. Even so, the percentages were relatively close to the global average of close to 14 per cent, according to the most recent data published by the World Bank.

Table 19
Percentages of Government expenditure on various levels of school education in the State of Qatar during the 2015–2017 period

Indicator	*2015*	*2016*	*2017*
Expenditure at all levels of school education as a percentage of total Government expenditure (overall State budget)	12%	10%	10%
Expenditure at all levels of school education as a percentage of nominal GDP	28%	36%	33%

Source: State of Qatar, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Department of Education Policies and Research, Statistics Division, 2017.

Article 11: Employment

130. The report refers in this regard to the information contained in the initial report, paragraphs 259-311. The State continues to adopt legislation regulating the labour market in line with the approach of the permanent Constitution. It does not include

any negative discrimination against women. Nor does it provide for any differentiation between men and women in salaries and benefits. On the contrary, such discrimination is exists is positive, both in the Human Resources Act (No. 15 of 2016) or the Labour Act (No. 14 of 2004), as was pointed out earlier in detail when addressing the observation on article 4 concerning special measures.

131. Legislation has set the minimum wage, and provides for equality between men and women in wages earned from work. The principle of equality in employment means treating all workers the same when their qualifications and experience are the same. The State of Qatar has ratified International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 100 (1951) concerning equal remuneration for male and female workers for work of equivalent value. It also ratified ILO Convention No. 111 (1958) concerning non-discrimination in respect of employment and occupation in 1976. It also has ratified Convention No. 105 (1957) the concerning the abolition of forced labour, which provides that labour law shall prohibit forcing any person to perform labour and that contracts between employers and workers shall be clear and freely arrived at. That ratification took place in 1997. Equality of work opportunities, the right to maternity leave, nursing breaks, and the prohibition of arbitrary dismissal or termination of labour contract because of marriage or maternity leave all have a direct bearing on the protection of women and help them and their families to achieve psychological and economic stability.[22] Article 11 of the Human Resources Act enacted in November 2016 provides that the Government may fill certain positions on a part-time basis in accordance with the conditions and guidelines issued by decision of the Cabinet.

132. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Qatar provides a permanent headquarters to the Association of Qatari Businesswomen, which was founded in 2000 to increase the role of Qatari women in economic decision making and encourage women to take an active part in establishing various investment projects. The Association of Qatari Businesswomen strives to achieve several goals, the most notable of which are as follows: to develop and strengthen the bonds of cooperation in commercial relationships between businesswomen; to create an environment conducive to them exercising their roles in the economic development process; and to strengthen the role of Qatari women in economic decision-making. The Association also aims to encourage women to contribute to setting up enterprises and small and artisanal manufacturing, and to strengthen the role of the private sector and the role of Qatari women in contributing to commercial and investment activities. The Association tries to guide awareness of laws regulating commercial and economic activities by holding meetings and seminars the help women become qualified to take an active part in the overall economic development process.

133. Women play a pivotal role in charitable organizations by providing various kinds of assistance and relief both inside and outside the community. They also engage in activities such as preparing field research on deprived families, arranging charity bazaars, and organizing donation campaigns for afflicted areas. Qatari women work in such associations both as staff and as volunteers. In late 2016, the Ministry of Economy and Trade began to grant licences to engage in commercial business from the home. That includes activities that do not require large outlays, rely essentially on individual skills, and do not involve equipment that might create a disturbance or hazardous materials. The goal is to make a sufficient amount of profit to provide for the livelihoods of the licensees and their families.

[22] See article 68 of the Labour Act (No. 14 of 2004).

134. The Qatar Business Incubation Center is one of the largest multi-service business incubation centres in the Middle East and North Africa region. It provides support services for commercial businesses to help entrepreneurs and companies that have ideas for starting commercial enterprises or to develop existing companies. The Center was founded in 2014 as an initiative of pioneering Government agencies in Qatar to support Qatari entrepreneurs by offering support to the Qatari entrepreneurial sector by providing financing, office space, mentoring and guidance. In the space of three years, it has realized numerous achievements, particularly in encouraging women to become involved in business. The percentage of women graduating from entrepreneurship programmes is 33 per cent. The percentage of women applying to enrol is approximately 33 per cent. It should be noted that 21 of the 52 companies to have come out of the Incubator are managed or held in partnership by women entrepreneurs. The Incubator has hosted a number of events and initiatives led by women.

Compliance with the recommendations on article 11

Empower working women and enact a law on domestic servants

135. In addition to the information already provided in this report above, the following may be noted:

- Law No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers entered into force on 13 December 2016. It main features are as follows:
  - It removes restrictions on the worker's freedom to change employers by allowing workers to move to a new employer. It has abolished the kafalah sponsorship system.
  - It has abolished the requirement that a worker must remain outside the country for two years before taking a new employment opportunity.
  - Workers are allowed to keep their passports. Confiscating passports has been criminalized and the penalties are severe.
  - Workers are allowed the freedom to leave the country. The requirement that they must obtain permission to leave has been abolished.
- Law No. 1 of 2015 amending certain provisions of the Labour Act (No. 14 of 2004) provides for a wage protection system. It requires transfer of wages to the worker's account in one of the State's financial institutions. That system has gone into force. Companies are required to transfer the salaries of all their workers through the system within seven days of each month. Legal measures are taken against companies that are late or refuse to pay salaries.
- Law No. 13 of 2017 amending certain provisions of the Labour Act (No. 14 of 2004) and Law No. 13 of 1990 promulgating the Code of Civil and Commercial Procedure provides for the establishment one or more committees with the power to rule on all disputes emerging from the provisions of the Labour Act or from a labour contract. A decision from such a committee would have executive force. Such a committee would be chaired by a judge from the court of first instance. It would be authorized to rule on an expedited basis within a period of not more than three weeks on all disputes arising from the provisions of the Labour Act or from a labour contract that are brought before it by the competent department of the Ministry when mediation by that department has failed to lead to an amicable settlement of the dispute in question. The law allows the

concerned parties to appeal the final judgments issued by the Committee before the competent court.

- Law No. 15 of 2017 on domestic workers places that category of worker under a protective legal umbrella that regulates the relationship between them and their employers by defining the rights and obligations of each party. The draft law took into account the ILO Convention concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers. The following are some of the major guarantees provided by that law.
  - It prohibits the hiring of domestic workers before they have obtained permission to work from the Government.
  - It prohibits hiring domestic workers in either gender below the age of 21 or over the age of 60.
  - Employment contracts for domestic workers must be approved by the competent department of the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs. Contracts must be drawn up in three copies; each party must receive a copy of the contract and the third copy must be deposited with the department. The employment contract contains clauses that establish the working relationship between the parties and provide all other information that must be provided in an employment contract.
  - The employer is required to provide food and decent housing to the domestic worker, and also suitable health care, medicines and medical necessities in the event that a worker becomes sick or is injured in the course of performing or as a result of his or her work, or because of said duties. That is to be done without requiring the domestic worker to pay any fees. Domestic workers must be treated well, and in a way that preserves their dignity and physical safety. The lives and health of domestic workers must not be endangered. They must not be physically or psychologically harmed in any way. Domestic workers may not be employed during their sick leave, rest breaks or weekly days off, unless the two parties have agreed otherwise.
  - The employer is required to pay an agreed-upon monthly wage to domestic workers in Qatari currency at the end of each Gregorian calendar month. It must be paid no later than the third day of the following month.
  - Matters relating to annual leave and end-of-service bonus are regulated.
  - Conditions for terminating a domestic worker prior to the end of the contract are specified.
  - Disputes arising between employers and domestic workers are subject to the Labour Act (No. 14 of 2004) and amendments thereto.
  - Domestic workers are to be compensated for injuries at work in accordance with the provisions of the above-mentioned Labour Act.
  - Penalties for violators of provisions of the Labour Act can be as high as 10,000 Qatari riyals.

Abolition of provisions imposing criminal penalties for flight are abolished.

136. The term "flight" is not used in any of the provisions of Law No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residency of migrant workers. Article 16, paragraph 1, of the above-mentioned law reads as follows: "A migrant who has permission to enter

or reside for a particular purpose or to work for a particular party may not contravene the purpose for which that permission was granted. He may not leave employment with his recruiter or work for a party other than the one he was licensed to work for." On the other hand, persons violating the above paragraph, whether by leaving employment or contravening the purpose for which they were granted residency, may reconcile such violations. Moreover, the actual situation as regulated by judgments handed down by the residency affairs court confirms that no penalty restricting freedom is imposed.

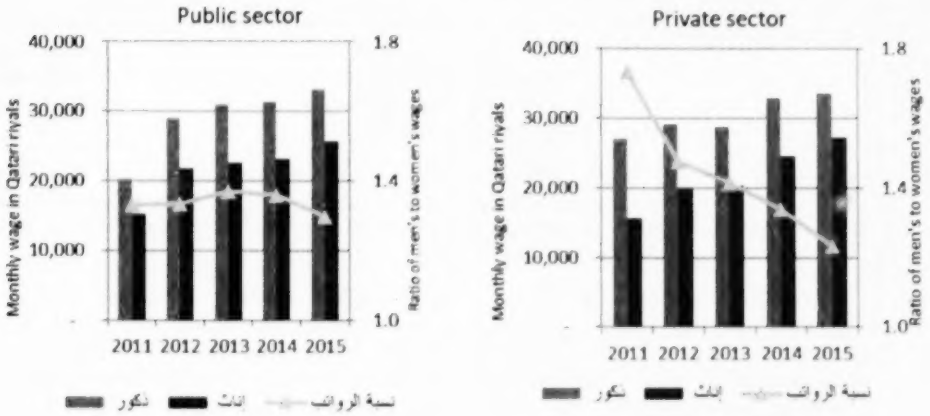
Confiscation of migrant workers' passports without justification

137. Such a measure would violate the provisions of Law No. 21 of 2015 regulating the entry, exit and residence of migrant workers. Article 8, paragraph 3, of that law criminalizes such acts. It provides as follows: "An employer must turn over a migrant worker's passport or other travel document after completion of permit or renewal procedures, unless the migrant worker requests the employer in writing to retain said passport or document, to be handed over to him upon request". The law provides for a deterrent penalty for this, consisting of a fine of no more than 25,000 Qatari riyals.

Reducing the gender wage gap

138. Figure 7 shows that the qualitative gap in average wages between the sexes has shrunk considerably. Average monthly salaries for males exceeded those for females by percentages ranging from 29 to 38 per cent for the period from 2011 to 2015.

Figure 6
Average difference between the salaries of males and females in the public and private sectors for the period 2011–2015



Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

Article 12: Health

139. Article 23 of the Qatari Constitution provides as follows: "The State shall promote public health and provide means of preventing and treating diseases and epidemics, in accordance with the law." Law No. 7 of 1996 regulating domestic medical treatment includes measures to eliminate discrimination against women in health care. In particular, article 4 thereof provides that it is not permitted to collect any fees or payments for emergency services, accidents that require hospitalization, preventive obstetric or pediatric services, preventive services provided to school students, and services related to infectious diseases and vaccinations.

140. The national primary health care strategy for the period 2013-2018 is in line with the principles of the Qatar National Vision 2030 and the Qatar national health strategy for the years 2011-2016. The strategy aims to address and confront future health challenges by placing primary health care at the centre of the health system. The Ministry of Public Health, in collaboration with the Hamad Medical Corporation, the Primary Health Care Corporation and other relevant parties, is charged with implementing the national health strategy. The national health strategy has achieved major progress in implementing number of projects to achieve its goals. An estimated 71 per cent of the strategy's outcomes have been achieved since its launch. Those achievements include, but are not limited to, the following:

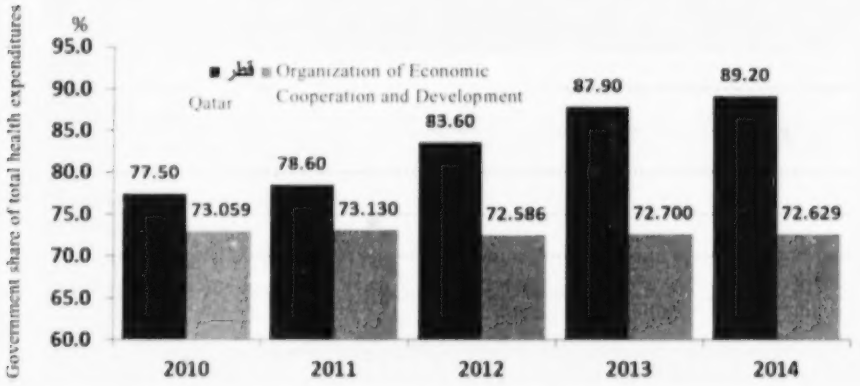
- A social health-insurance system was launched that guarantees treatment in both the public and private sectors.
- An infrastructure master plan has been formulated. In November 2013, the Ministry of Health launched the Qatar Healthcare Facilities Master Plan. Some 25 health centres and 11 hospitals will be opened and 82 other facilities will be built or renovated by 2022 in order to keep pace with the new approach to health care.

- The Qatari Council for Medical Specializations has been established to monitor all health practitioners and support clinical staff by developing training programmes.
- The National Health Strategy has provided the necessary guidelines for action in priority areas. The following strategies have been launched: a national strategy to fight cancer (2011-2016), a national strategy for Cancer research, a national strategy to integrate laboratory services and create uniform standards (2013-2018), a national strategy for primary health care (2013-2018), and a national strategy for mental health (2013-2018).
- In June 2014, the Primary Health Care Corporation received a platinum certification from Accreditation Canada International. That certification rates the quality, safety and compatibility with international standards of the services provided by the Primary Health Care Corporation.

141. Qatari laws and legislation guarantee the right to access to medical care services without discrimination. The Hamad Medical Corporation has issued a charter and posts the rights and responsibilities of patients and their families in the corridors of all medical facilities. That charter affirms basic principles guaranteeing the right to health. That includes the right to access to primary health care services without regard to ethnicity, religion, country of origin, beliefs, values, language, age or disability. It also includes the right to access to health care and services without an unreasonable delay, and to necessary care provided an appropriate and respectful manner at all times. The dignity of patients must be preserved. The patient has the right to an effective and appropriate support mechanism in case there is any grievance or complaint, and also the right to privacy and confidentiality.

Health spending

Figure 7
Government share of expenditure on health care for the 2010–2014 period



Data source: Ministry of Public Health, National Health Accounts 2016, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Health Statistics for 2016.

142. Public expenditures in the health sector came to 10.8 per cent of total public spending in the year 2016. Figure 7 shows the Government share of health care spending for the 2010-2014 period. It was 89.2 per cent in 2014, which exceeded the

average for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development by 17 points.

Compliance with recommendations relating to health

143. The Women's Hospital plays a major role in advancing women's health in Qatar. The hospital provides a wide range of obstetric services. The vast majority of children born in the state of Qatar are born there. There are over 17,000 children born there every year, making it one of the busiest of the eight hospitals affiliated with the Hamad Corporation. Recent improvements to the Women's Hospital include the addition of new observation units and expansion of the maternal-fetal unit, which provides services to women with high-risk pregnancies. In addition to women's health, the Women's Hospital has a neonatal unit that provides intensive care services for newborns.

144. Law No. 2 of 1983 regulates the practice of human medicine and dental medicine and surgery. Article 15 provides that "if a doctor suspects that a patient has contracted one of the infectious diseases listed in the table attached to Decree-Law No. 11 of 1968 referred to above, he is required to report that within 24 hours at the most, using the reporting form for cases of communicable diseases prepared by the competent agency for that purpose. In the case that the doctor suspects that a patient has contracts one of the diseases for which the Ministry requires quarantine, the doctor must verify the type of disease and report it via telephone as soon any cases are detected that would be difficult to keep in the clinic." That is in order to ensure treatment of the patient during his stay in the State.

145. With regard to the recommendation on addressing the difficulties that female workers have gaining access to health care, we note that the health system of the State — which includes the Hamad Medical Corporation, the Communicable Disease Center, the Qatar Rehabilitation Center, the Specialized Care Center (intensive care), children's emergency clinics and the Primary Health Care Corporation — provides all its services to all members of society without discrimination. That includes female workers. The Ministry of Public Health provides electronic health services that are characterized by efficiency, rapid response and effective results. They keep pace with political, economic and social reforms, ensuring women inhabitants and workers of all ages can enjoy healthy lives without any difficulty accessing health services.

146. The Medical Commission is a department of the Ministry of Public Health. Its function is to examine all new arrivals intending to reside and work in the State of Qatar to make certain that they do not have any communicable diseases, and in particular HIV-AIDS, hepatitis B, hepatitis C, syphilis or tuberculosis.

147. Migrant workers are given laboratory tests when they arrive in the State for the first time before taking up residency in the State. If the laboratory results are positive, they are sent back. If a disease is detected after they have taken up residency in the State, they receive the appropriate treatment for communicable diseases as prescribed in the table annexed to Decree-Law No. 11 of 1968.

148. With regard to ensuring access by migrant workers to health care in an emergency, we have already mentioned Law No. 7 of 1996 regulating medical treatment within the country. In particular, article 4 thereof provides that no fees or charges shall be collected for the following services: emergencies, accidents requiring hospitalization, etc.

149. Abortions are regulated by Law No. 2 of 1983 concerning the practice of human medicine and dental medicine and surgery. Article 17 of that law prohibits abortion

except to save the life of the mother. However, in the case of pregnancies less than four months, abortion is permitted in the following two cases: (a) if continuation of the pregnancy poses definite and serious harm to the mother's health; (b) if the fetus will be born seriously damaged by physical deformity or mental defect that cannot be cured, and only on condition that both parents agree to the abortion. An abortion must be performed in a Government hospital by decision of a medical committee composed of three specialists, at least one of whom specialises in gynaecology and obstetrics.

150. Law No. 7 of 2013 on the health insurance system provides for equality in treatment, non-discrimination, the exercise of all rights and freedoms and the same treatment as Qatari citizens for certain categories, including non-Qatari women married to Qataris, the children of Qatari women married to non-Qataris, and other groups identified by decision of the Minister. The Health Insurance Act and its implementing regulations include numerous plans, policies, procedures, systems and standards for access to a range of treatments and compulsory health insurance coverage for preventive services, treatment, interpretive services and medical exams.

151. The State of Qatar makes sure to hold numerous free awareness-raising events, especially on women's illnesses. That includes, but is not limited to, breast cancer, which is one of the most widespread diseases in the State of Qatar, accounting for 31 per cent of cancers among women. The risk of contracting breast cancer is 56 cases per 100,000 women.[23] Awareness is an important and effective factor in increasing the chances that a cancer patient will receive treatment and be cured, provided the disease is detected, diagnosed and treated early.

Article 13: Economic and social benefits

152. Part II of the Qatari Constitution, which covers the guiding principles of society, states that Qatari society is founded on justice, benevolence, freedom, equality and high moral values. The Constitution establishes that the State is responsible for upholding these principles and for guaranteeing security, stability, equal opportunities, solidarity and fellowship among citizens. The Constitution stresses that the family is the basis of society and is founded on religion, morality and patriotism.

153. The fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution are reinforced by a body of national legislation and laws on the rights of the child and of persons with disabilities. For example, articles 165-188 of the Family Act (No. 22 of 2006) regulate custody, and give priority to the mother in child custody. Under the law, guardianship ends when the child reaches either the age of 13, in the case of boys, or 15, in the case of girls, unless the court decides that it is in the interests of the child that guardianship should continue. The courts may also allow the child to choose one of the two parties to the dispute, after it has determined their suitability. In view of the needs of children with special needs, they may remain under the guardianship of women longer. The Family Act draws its provisions from Islamic law, and helps judges made consistent rulings in various family law cases. That law has many outstanding features. One of them is equality of rights and duties between spouses.

154. The Social Security Act (No. 38 of 1995) and its amendments provides for social security pensions for persons of unknown parentage, orphans, persons unable to work, the elderly, widows, divorcees, deserted wives, families of prisoners, families of missing persons and families in need. Data from the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs show that social security relief payments

[23] Source: Qatar Cancer Register.

were 200 per cent higher in 2014 than in 2013, and that the number of recipients of such payments doubled between 2007 and 2015.

155. At the procedural level, in 2016 and 2017, the Department of Family Affairs at the Ministry of Administrative Development conducted numerous efforts and activities to advance the rights of women to a level equal to those of men in the economic and social spheres. Those have already been covered above in paragraph 44 of this report above.

156. With regard to measures taken to eliminate discrimination against women in access to bank loans, microfinance, etc, in general, there are no rules restricting women's access to bank financing and business opportunities. On the contrary, the State encourages women to enter the liberal professions and launch enterprises. That is all confirmed by international indicators.

157. Some banks offer banking services directed at women, as does the International Bank of Qatar. The Qatar Development Bank has no rules or procedures that discriminate between the sexes in any of the services it provides, financial or non-financial. The Bank goes out of its way to offer training sessions to make sure that organizational arrangements are in line with the cultural traditions of the society, which allows for greater participation by women. The Qatar Development Bank, in collaboration with other institutions, offers special services to the owners of home businesses. Women represent the lion's share of such owners, at 80 per cent. The Bank also organizes special fairs for their products, such as the "Products of our Homes" exhibit held in September 2017.

158. The results of the Labour Force Sample Survey conducted by the State's Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics for the second quarter of 2017 show that the number of participants in the State's labour force declined from 2,108,881 in the first quarter of 2017 to 1,985,264 for the second quarter of 2017. Of those, 86.6 per cent were males and 13.4 per cent were females. The data indicate that the rate of economic participation for persons aged 15 years and over was 88.6 per cent, which breaks down to 96.2 per cent of males compared with 58.7 per cent of females. The 25-34 year old age group had the highest rate of economic participation, at 94.6 per cent, according to those data. The economic dependency was 29.8 per cent for that quarter. The results show that the rate of economic participation for Qataris was 52.0 per cent of the total population aged 15 years and over. Qatari males were 68.1 per cent, and Qatari females 36.8 per cent, or the total Qatari workforce. Despite a reduced gender gap, there is a lingering disparity that can be attributed to the large proportion of the Qatari females who are not economically active, and stay home as housewives.

Table 20

Economic participation rate (age 15 and above) by sex through the second quarter of 2017

Not economically active	*Employed*	*Economically active*	*Population (age 15 and older)*	*Population*	*Relationship with work force*
67 793	1 718 238	1 719 343	1 787 136	1 957 096	Males
187 026	264 153	265 921	452 947	609 148	Females
254 819	1 982 391	1 985 264	2 240 083	2 566 244	Total

Source: Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

159. It should be noted that the State of Qatar lays great importance on conducting a regular periodic labour force survey. It sets aside budgets and makes efforts to provide comprehensive statistics on the economically active population to serve as a basis for keeping track of trends and changes in the labour market. The statistics also form the basis for designing macroeconomic policy, and provide indicators on employment and unemployment that can be used as a general indicator of economic performance.

160. With regard to cultural aspects, the Constitution provides that "the State shall foster the sciences, literature, the arts and the national cultural heritage. It shall preserve them, help to disseminate them, and promote scientific research." Those fostering activities include all citizens, both male and female. The cultural and youth centres of the Ministry of Culture and Sport have held several symposiums and panel discussions on women's rights.

161. Several issues of Doha Magazine, a publication of the Ministry of Culture and Sports, have addressed the topic of women's rights. Other publications of the Ministry of Culture and Sports have covered Qatari women from various angles. The State of Qatar does not place any restriction on the practice by both sexes of various arts or the pursuit of cultural life generally. On the contrary, it promotes such activities by supporting artistic groups and individual artists. It holds theatre and film festivals, organizes an international book fair, and much more. A Qatari woman held the post of executive president of the Doha film foundation. There are also a number of outstanding Qatari women film directors.

Article 14: Rural women

162. The State of Qatar does not have rural areas. The population is concentrated in urban areas. Some 100 per cent of the people in the State live in cities. Because of the high per capita income and living standards in the State, many urban problems and challenges targeted by the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations (Habitat III) have been addressed, including slums, crime and extreme poverty, which are all negligible in Qatar The State's sustainable development policies, with the four dimensions as declared in the National Vision 2030, respond to the country's development challenges. A quick glance at the National Development Strategy 2011-2016 and the Strategy for 2018-2022 shows that they embody a number of the basic goals and objectives of the New Urban Agenda of the United Nations. The State of Qatar forcefully legislated implementation of a number of massive urban projects involving infrastructure, culture, heritage, sports, housing, public parks and green buildings. The relevant State ministries and institutions provide education, health, cultural and athletic services in all regions to inhabitants of both sexes.

Article 15: Civil rights

163. In that regard, we refer you to the information provided in the State party's initial report in the section regarding civil rights (paragraphs 390-410).

Article 16: Marriage and family relations

164. We refer to the information contained in the State party's initial report in the section on this article (paragraphs 411-456).

Implementation of recommendations related to the article

Raising women's awareness of their rights

165. The Department of Family Affairs at the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs has conducted the following training courses and workshops for the empowerment of women:

- "Family development";
- An awareness-raising programme entitled "Women leaders", which serves as a pillar of social development in the Qatar National Vision 2030, and of family cohesion and women's empowerment, the objectives of which include "increasing the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions by 30 per cent";
- An awareness-raising programme entitled "gender equality", which was timed to coincide with International Human Rights Day in December 2015. The workshop sought to explain the idea of equality between men and women, whenever, wherever and however. The workshop focused on integration between the two sides in society, the roles of men and women in various aspects of life, and clarification of the responsibilities of each of the genders.
- An awareness-raising programme entitled "Violence against women – Be kind to your womenfolk" was held in conjunction with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The programme was part of the national strategic plan, Qatar Vision 2030, and the strategy for family cohesion and the empowerment of women.

Marriage

166. The Qatari Family Act, article 17, provides that "the marriage of a boy under 18 years of age or a girl under 16 years of age shall only be certified with the approval of the guardian, verification of the consent of both parties to the contract, and the approval of the competent judge". Even where guarantees for conclusion of a marriage contract for a girl under 18 – which consist of "approval of the guardian, verification of the consent of both parties to the contract, and permission and a licence from a competent judge" – are met, the behaviour of a minor must be taken into account – whether or not it is of benefit to him. Otherwise, it is null and void if his behaviour is harmful to him. As for demeanour that switches back and forth from beneficial to harmful, it is null and void where making it null and void is in the interest of the minor. As for forced marriage, it is prohibited, and the conclusion of such contracts is prohibited in accordance with Qatari legislation. The Family Act, article 11, lists the foundations of marriage contracts, which are that the two parties must satisfy the relevant conditions and there must be an offer and acceptance. Article 12 of that same act provides that for a marriage contract to be valid, both parties are competent and free of legal impediments, there must have been an offer and acceptance, and other conditions must be fulfilled.

167. If any one of the requirements for the validity of a marriage is not present, or the conditions provided for in the guidelines and provisions for marriage under the sharia and the law are not fulfilled – such as that one of the parties to the marriage forced the other, or was forced to act against his or her will, or was subject to any means of material or psychological compulsion from either the spouse or the guardian – then the party that acted under duress or a victim of a forced marriage may request annulment of the marriage contract. Compulsion with respect to the marriage contract

renders the consent of the spouse that acted under duress invalid. Consent is not absent and will is present if the spouse had a choice between concluding the marriage or falling under pressure, and he chose to enter into the marriage.

168. According to the Report on Marriage and Divorce in Qatar in 2016 issued by the Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics, the overall marriage rate saw a palpable decrease from 2010 to 2016. That decrease has been steady over the past five years. It dropped from 24.2 per thousand for males in 2010 to 23.8 per thousand inhabitants aged 15 and older in 2016. The decrease can be explained by an increase in the level of education for women and their entry in force into the labour market. The indicator for the average age upon first marriage, it shows that the average age upon first marriage showed a quasi-decline for males, which was paralleled by an increase for females during the 2010-2016 period. It was 26.5 and 23.9 years old in 2010, and 26.3 and 24.1 for males and females respectively in 2016.

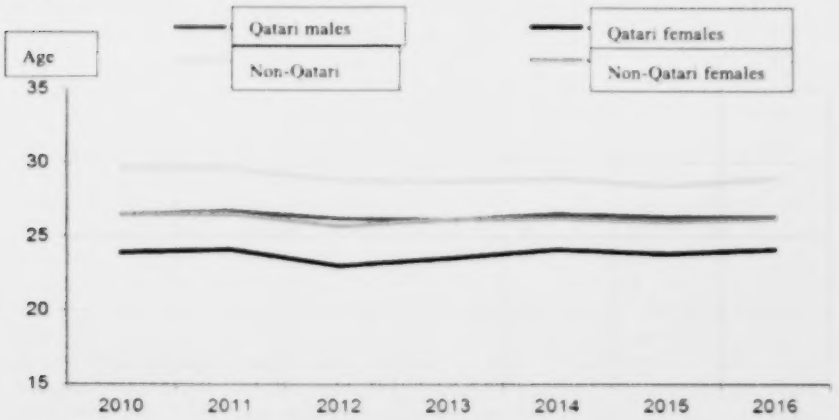
169. As for the age categories of spouses, there was an evident increase in the ages of male non-Qatari spouses compared with male Qatari spouses in the 20-29 year old age group. The percentage of male spouses was 66.1 per cent of the total Qatari male spouses, versus a rate of 51.8 per cent of total non-Qatari male spouses in that age group. Similarly, the percentage of male spouses for the age group 30-39 increased for non-Qataris. It was 36.8 out of total non-Qatari male spouses, while for that same age group for Qataris it was only 22.2 per cent of the total number of Qatari male spouses.

170. There was also a notable increase in the ages of non-Qatari female spouses compared to Qataris. The percentage of Qatari female spouses in the 20-29 year old age group was higher than the percentage of their non-Qatari counterparts in that age group. The percentage was 65.5 per cent of all Qatari female spouses, but the percentage for non-Qataris was 61.3 per cent.

171. Similarly, we see an increase in the percentage for the 30-39 age group for non-Qatari women. It was 22.4 per cent of non-Qatari female spouses versus 14.9 per cent of all female spouses for Qatari female spouses. We note a slight disparity in the percentages for the 40-49 year old age groups between Qataris and non-Qataris. The percentages are 4.4 per cent and 6 per cent respectively.

Figure 8

Average age at first marriage, disaggregated by nationality and sex from 2009 to 2016



Source: Report on Marriage and Divorce in Qatar in 2016, Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics.

172. The development-oriented approach of the State, which is based on partnership and bringing together various sectors, has seen notable progress. It has been reinforced and enhanced over the past few years with a more inclusive implementation concept, through the establishment of independent civil society institutions and organizations. In that regard, the Qatar Social Work Foundation has monitored efforts by civil society organizations to implement international agreements relevant to its goals. It works to cooperate with centres that contribute to implementation of obligations stemming from such agreements. The Wefaq Family Consulting Centre, in accordance with the goals for which it was established, undertakes to contribute to strengthening marriage and family ties, and to reduce family breakups. The Centre works to support and encourage positive and equal marriage concluded freely and without any deficiencies with regard to consent or full legal capacity as provided for by the guidelines and legal provisions contained in the Family Act and accepted social norms, and to confront various aspects of family breakdown and factors that undermine and weaken the family. The Family Counselling Centre has made progress towards eliminating forced marriage and reducing the risks of early marriage.

173. Years ago, as part of its development project plans, the Wifaq Center adopted a training project for people intending to get married. A number of activities planned in connection with that project have been implemented. They include offering awareness-raising lectures geared towards young people of marriage age of both sexes; holding training workshops to encourage young people to marry; and holding preparatory workshops for people intending to get married, in cooperation with the Ministry of Administrative Development, Labour and Social Affairs.

174. Recent statistics on divorce among Qataris point to a decrease in the divorce rate for Qatari males from 10.9 divorces per 1000 marriages in 2008 to 8.3 divorces per 1000 marriages in 2016, and from 9.3 to 6.8 for Qatari females during that same period.

Part III

Challenges and future orientations

175. In this section, the report surveys the challenges facing implementation of certain provisions of the Convention, recommendations offered, and future proposals for the advancement of women in all areas.

The unjust blockade currently being imposed on Qatar

176. Since early June 2017, the State of Qatar has been subjected to unilateral coercive measures and an unjust blockade imposed by certain States in the region. That has resulted in serious and ongoing violations of human rights, and especially of women's rights. To date, the National Human Rights Committee has recorded 3,446 human rights complaints having to do with freedom of movement, freedom of residence, freedom of property ownership, the right to work, the right to education, the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to health, the right to freedom of belief, the right to development, and other social violations having to do with families being split up, which is the most abominable of such violations. Statistics show that there are 5137 Qatari men married to women of Saudi Arabian, United Arab Emirates and Bahraini nationality, and 1337 Qatari women married to husbands from those three countries, who have been affected by the decisions. A commission has been formed to seek compensation for the impact of the blockade imposed on the State of Qatar, to function as a central commission to receive and consider cases of people harmed by the blockade and to determine the best way to address each such case.

177. The National Human Rights Commission has documented several cases in which Qatari women had been forced to leave the territories of those three countries without their children who bear the nationalities of those countries. In addition, some women who are citizens of those three countries and have Qatari husbands have been told to leave the State of Qatar, being forced to leave behind their Qatari children and husbands. The travel ban and forced expulsions imposed by the Governments of the three countries have led to severe psychological trauma, especially for children and women who have been separated from their families. Unless an end is brought to these unjustified coercive measures soon, they might have far-reaching implications for destroying the social fabric and breaking down family ties.

Challenges and future orientations

178. The State has made numerous legislative, institutional and awareness-raising improvements in the area of implementing the provisions of the Convention and complying with the observations and recommendations of the Committee on the initial report of the State party. However, there are still challenges facing the State. They include a dramatic and unprecedented population increase of over 100 per cent over the last few years, as well as the recentness of legislative and institutional developments.

179. The fact that Qatari women assumed their posts as members of the Shura Council in 2017 will ensure that a range of segments of society are represented in the State's legislative authority. That will inevitably need to closing any legislative gaps relating to the needs of women at all levels.

180. Overcoming stereotypes about women's role in society will help to push forward women's empowerment. The State of Qatar aspires to closing gender gaps with a view to greater access by women to social, economic and political opportunities. Qatar has also made progress towards encouraging Qatari women to become involved in economic life and diversify sources of income by supporting

efforts by the Bank of Qatar and the Qatar Chamber of Commerce to reduce obstacles and create opportunities for women to create various economic enterprises.

181. National mechanisms having to do with women's issues in the State of Qatar are making efforts to realize greater achievements in the area of reviewing national legislation on women and amending it to bring it into line with international instruments, as well as to offer proposals for laws that promote equal opportunities and take into account gender. Although the political will exists in the State to support accession to international agreements owing to their importance for strengthening and protecting women's rights, the accession by the State of Qatar to numerous international agreements within a short period of time has created pressure and become a burden for the legislative organs of the State. That precludes accession to further agreements at the present time.

182. In keeping with the State's commitment to and belief in the importance of carrying out its obligations stemming from ratification of human rights treaties, His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs issued Decision No. 44 of 2017 establishing a Division for Human Rights Treaties in the Department of Human Rights at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Among other competences, it is charged with preparing plans and proposals for implementing the recommendations issued by treaty and non-treaty mechanisms relating to human rights. Work is currently ongoing to prepare a core document to serve as the introduction to reports to treaty bodies, in implementation of recommendations from various monitoring committees.

183. Pursuant to a decision by the Cabinet at its nineteenth ordinary meeting of 2014, the State of Qatar is presently drafting a national human rights action plan. A national Government committee was formed to prepare a draft national human rights action plan, to be chaired by His Excellency the Secretary General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with members from the relevant Government agencies. The national human rights action plan illustrates a clear and practical approach to strengthening and protecting human rights. It may be viewed as a tool for improving the human rights situation in the State the development of the national action plan for human rights and a clear approach to the promotion and protection of human rights where they viewed as a tool to improve the human rights situation in the State.

184. Without questions, there is sufficient political will and material resources to overcome any challenges and plot a future course for women's empowerment.

Conclusion

185. Women are considered to be at the centre of the evolved Qatari family that serves as the basis for society. Even though Qatari women hold fast to traditions and values that include preserving language, moral principles, patterns of behaviour, values systems and religious beliefs, they are nonetheless capable at the same time of adapting to the effects of modernization. Accession by the State of Qatar to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women affirms the commitment of the State to building the capacities of women and empowering them to participate actively in public economic and political life. It also ensures that they will have access to decision-making positions. Qatar has pledged that it will spare no effort in realizing its vision for improving women's economic situation and increasing their contribution to the development of society by working side by side with men. As shown by this report, the State of Qatar is working to monitor and follow up on the implementation of the provisions of the Convention, to raise awareness of them and to train the parties involved on its provisions. The aim is thereby to provide greater opportunities for achieving gender equality and the further advancement of women.